NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
HISTORY
HELLRAISER
THE HIDEOUS HISTORY OF SATAN
ZARATHUSTRA
FIERY PROPHET OF PERSIA
HIDE AND SEEK
ANCIENT MAYA CITIES EXPOSED
UNSOLVED MYSTERY
THE BLOODY CASE OF JACK THE RIPPER
PLUS:
House of Wax
Madame Tussaud's Revolutionary Origins
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

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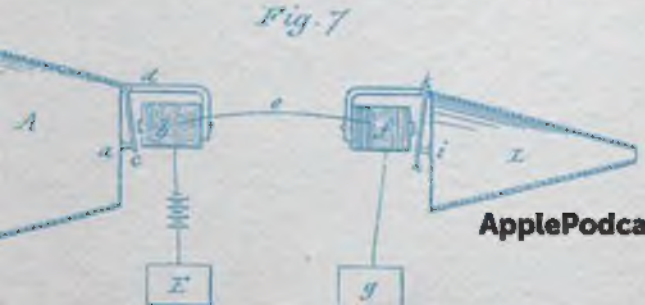

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If you close your eyes and imagine evil, what do you see? A scarlet man with horns and a pitchfork? A pair of glowing eyes glaring in the dark? A dark force thriving on fear and pain? Evil has many incarnations, and in this issue, **HISTORY** explores two of them—one spiritual and the other physical.

The first article delves into medieval Christian art to show how the devil's appearance evolved over centuries from fallen angel to horned monster, like the one shown above in this 15th-century Spanish altarpiece. In many of these artworks, evil is vividly rendered as an ugly, slavering beast awaiting sinful souls to punish in hell.

In the story of Jack the Ripper, evil is a mystery man: predatory, anonymous, and elusive. Dwelling in the shadows, it inflicts horror on the living. Unidentified, it can't be sketched or photographed. The only proof of its existence are the brutalized bodies of its victims, killed in one short season in 1888. Unlike the garish, medieval images of the devil, Jack the Ripper lived in the dark: unshackled and unpunished—an evil defined by both its physical absence and malevolent presence.

Amy Briggs

Amy Briggs, Executive Editor

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

HISTORY

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EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS SUSAN GOLDBERG
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MAYA MAJESTY
Frederick Catherwood's detailed illustrations, like this one of Chichén Itzá, revealed the sophistication of Maya architecture and civilization.

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LONDON'S *ILLUSTRATED POLICE NEWS* SENSATIONALIZED THE LATEST THEORIES AND SUSPECTS IN THE RIPPER CASE.

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their malady was of divine origin, but the cause turned out to be more mundane.

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In 1908 stunning sculptures of Menkaure found near the
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RECOVERING THE DEAD The remains of the ritually murdered children are carefully uncovered at Las Llamas near the ancient city of Chan Chan on Peru's northern coast.
GABRIEL PRIETO/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

BUILT near the mouth of the Moche River, Chan Chan grew on the back of Chimú agricultural dominance. In its early 15th-century heyday, the city was a powerhouse of metalworking and envied for its wealth.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Chimú Child Sacrifice: An Appeal to the Heavens

In coastal Peru a team of archaeologists have uncovered history's largest mass child sacrifice, which took place more than 500 years ago.

Archaeologists from the United States and Peru have uncovered the single, largest act of mass child sacrifice found to date.

A team led by Gabriel Prieto of the Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, and John Verano of Tulane University, Louisiana, discovered a mass grave in northern Peru on a bluff about a thousand feet from the sea. The burial site Huanchaquito-Las Llamas, dubbed "Las Llamas" by archaeologists, holds the remains of more than 140 children, the majority between eight and 12 years old. Also found were the remains of 200 baby llamas, sacrificed alongside the children.

Supported by grants from the National Geographic Society, the archaeologists noted that the skeletons bore injuries consistent with human sacrifice: "It is ritual killing, and it's very systematic," Verano said.

The team had been excavating a temple near the ancient coastal site of Chan Chan in

GABRIEL PRIETO/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Peru when residents of nearby Huanchaquito reported finding skeletons in the sand. The team explored the site and began a dig there that would last for several years as they studied and recovered the remains.

Angry Gods

The killings were carried out more than 500 years ago by the wealthy pre-Columbian Chimú civilization. Their capital sat near the mouth of the Moche River and was home to as many as 40,000 people.

A muddy layer of soil extends across the site and offers intriguing clues about the sacrifices. The researchers concluded that the children met their fate at the same time because their bodies were all found in this layer. It may also offer an insight into motivation. The presence of mud in such an arid environment suggests an unusual amount of heavy rainfall, perhaps caused by the meteorological phenomenon known as El Niño.

Prieto and Verano have theorized that the wet weather caused flooding that damaged irrigation and hurt fisheries, which prompted priests to make extreme gestures to appease angry gods. If so, this desperate act was in vain: Around 1475 the Inca would sweep away what was left of the Chimú civilization.

LIVES FOR THE GODS

HUMAN SACRIFICE has been recorded in the Aztec, Maya, and Inca cultures, but the rite more typically involved the deaths of adults. Child sacrifice seems to have been much rarer. Before the Las Llamas find, the largest known incident had been at the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, where 42 children were killed. As in this, and in cases of individual child murder at Inca sites, the violence at Las Llamas was highly ritualized. The children's faces were daubed with a red, cinnabar-based pigment, traces of which were found on their skulls. Their sternums and ribs also bear the marks of a quick, deliberate strike, most likely a deep cut across the chest.

ABOVE RIGHT: ❶ CEREMONIAL KNIFE FROM A CONTEMPORANEOUS PRE-COLUMBIAN SOCIETY (MUSEO ORO DEL PERÚ). **BELOW (FOUND AT LAS LLAMAS):** ❷ SKULL STAINED RED WITH CINNABAR. ❸ SEVERED STERNUM. ❹ HUMAN RIB BEARING CLEAR SIGNS OF TRAUMA

TOP: ORONOZ/ALBUM
BOTTOM: JOHN VERANO/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Madame Tussauds: The House That Wax Built

After surviving the horrors of the French Revolution, Marie Tussaud combined her talent for sculpture and her life experience to create unforgettable wax figures. Her works would captivate Britain and go on to form the core of an empire of museums.

A Life in Figures

1761

Marie Grosholtz is born in Strasbourg, France. She grows up in the Bern home of her mother's employer, the doctor and sculptor Philippe Curtius.

1765

Curtius moves to **Paris,** and young Marie and her mother will follow two years later. There he will teach the girl to create lifelike waxworks.

1789

The **French Revolution** breaks out, and Marie is accused of being a royalist. To escape execution, she sculpts wax death masks.

1794

Curtius dies, and Marie inherits his waxworks. A year later, she marries François Tussaud. Despite being in an **unhappy marriage,** the couple have two sons.

1802

Leaving France, **Madame Tussaud** travels to Britain and gains fame with her waxworks. She will never again return to France.

Paris seethed with tension in the summer of 1789 as crisis engulfed France. Gripped with revolutionary fervor, the people were clamoring for a greater say in their government. In July outrage grew after King Louis XVI fired his reform-minded finance minister, Jacques Necker. A huge crowd of revolutionaries took to the streets of the capital, waving black flags and mimicking a funeral cortège. They bore wax effigies of both Necker and the pro-democracy prince, the Duke of Orléans. Taken from the collection of a well-known waxwork artist, these likenesses may have been sculpted by his apprentice, Marie Grosholtz, who would become better known by her married name: Madame Tussaud.

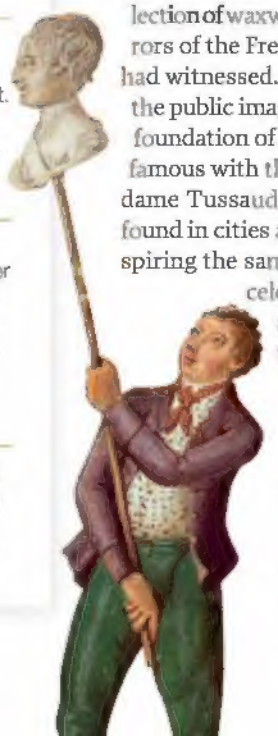
Years later, Marie sculpted a new collection of waxworks inspired by the horrors of the French Revolution that she had witnessed. These figures captured the public imagination and became the foundation of an empire. Blending the famous with the grotesque, today Madame Tussauds wax museums can be found in cities all around the world, inspiring the same fascination of seeing celebrities rendered in wax as they did in England in the 19th century.

Molding of Madame

Much of what is known of Madame Tussaud's early life comes from her memoirs, which she dictated to a friend, Francis Hervé, when she was in her late 70s. The work is full of colorful details and anecdotes, some of which were never verified. Tussaud was very conscious of her image, which she carefully cultivated over the years, and may have embellished. Hervé generously attributed this tendency to her advanced age which led to "recollections [that] must sometimes be in a degree confused and impaired."

Madame Tussaud was born Marie Grosholtz in Strasbourg, eastern France, in 1761, months after her father was killed in the Seven Years' War. Her early childhood was spent in the Swiss city of Bern, where her mother worked as housekeeper to the anatomist and wax modeler Dr. Philippe Curtius.

Having abandoned medicine to pursue his art full time, Curtius moved to Paris in 1765, and two years later, little Marie and her mother joined him. In the absence of a father, Curtius acted as guardian to the little girl, and she regarded him like an uncle. Curtius's waxworks had built a considerable following, and his first exhibition in 1770 grew so successful that it was moved to the royal palace in 1776.

In her memoir Tussaud wrote that during the Reign of Terror her head was shaved in preparation for the guillotine.

A FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY HOISTS A WAX BUST BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN SCULPTED BY MARIE TUSSAUD IN THIS DETAIL FROM A LATE 18TH-CENTURY GOUACHE. CARNAVALET MUSEUM, PARIS

JOSSE/SCALA, FLORENCE

ELGAR COLLECTION/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

AN EARLY IMPRESSION

THIS WAXWORK of Marie Grosholtz was fashioned by her mentor, Dr. Philippe Curtius, in 1784. The future Madame Tussaud was in her early 20s when she was in residence at Versailles. According to her memoirs, her skills had earned her a position tutoring members of the French royal family. Her placid expression and regal dress give no hint of the terrors to come after 1789 when the French Revolution broke out. Witnessing the horrors of the day would give her the toughness and the subject matter that formed the foundation of her later success.

Curtius taught Marie how to make wax sculptures. She was 15 or 16 when she created her first figure, a likeness of the philosopher Voltaire. She followed it with waxworks of other famous figures, such as the Romantic philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who would inspire the leaders of the French Revolution, and the American patriot Benjamin Franklin. She later wrote in her memoirs how both were regular guests at Curtius's Paris home.

In 1782 Curtius unveiled a second exhibition of celebrity busts on the Boulevard du Temple. It included a *Caverne des Grands Voleurs* (Cavern of the Great Thieves), featuring sculptures of criminals, some whose corpses were delivered to Curtius following execution so that he could capture their likenesses. An observant student, Marie would later use this idea for her own Chamber of Horrors.

Keeping Her Head

In her memoirs Madame Tussaud recounted how, around 1780, she became a favorite at the palace of Versailles and taught modeling to Madame Elizabeth, the king's sister. When revolution broke out in 1789, Marie and her mentor, both accused of having monarchist sympathies, found themselves in danger. Curtius, as a good businessman, knew that the best way to survive was to adapt his waxwork collection to the quickly changing times. Revolutionary leaders and those sent to the guillotine became the new stars of his gallery.

Marie recalled how during the Reign of Terror that lasted from the fall of 1793 to the summer of 1794, she was arrested, together with Joséphine de Beauharnais, the future wife of Napoleon. She went as

A MODEL FAMILY

THE SCULPTING GENE was strong in Tussaud's family, and her successors turned the museum into a lucrative family business. Even after it was no longer in the family's hands, Tussaud's great-grandson, John Theodore Tussaud, was museum manager until the 1940s. He wrote a biography of his great-grandmother and was a respected modeler in his own right, sculpting busts of contemporary figures, like Christabel Pankhurst (left), a suffragette imprisoned in the early 1900s.

AGE FOTOSTOCK

MARIE PREPARES a death mask from a severed head during the Reign of Terror. Madame Tussauds, London

GRANGER/AURIMAGES

far as having her head shaved in preparation for execution. In return for clemency, both she and Curtius are said to have taken on a gruesome task—sculpting death masks of the executed.

There is, in fact, little evidence outside Tussaud's own account that she directly sculpted masks of the freshly guillotined king or the assassinated revolutionary leader Jean-Paul Marat, although models of these figures did find their way into Curtius's collection. Despite the uncertainty, the notion of Tussaud undertaking such grisly work became one of the most famous aspects of her life story. As the English poet Hilaire Belloc wrote with wonder: "The hand that modeled Marat was a hand of Marat's age. It touched the flesh of the dead man."

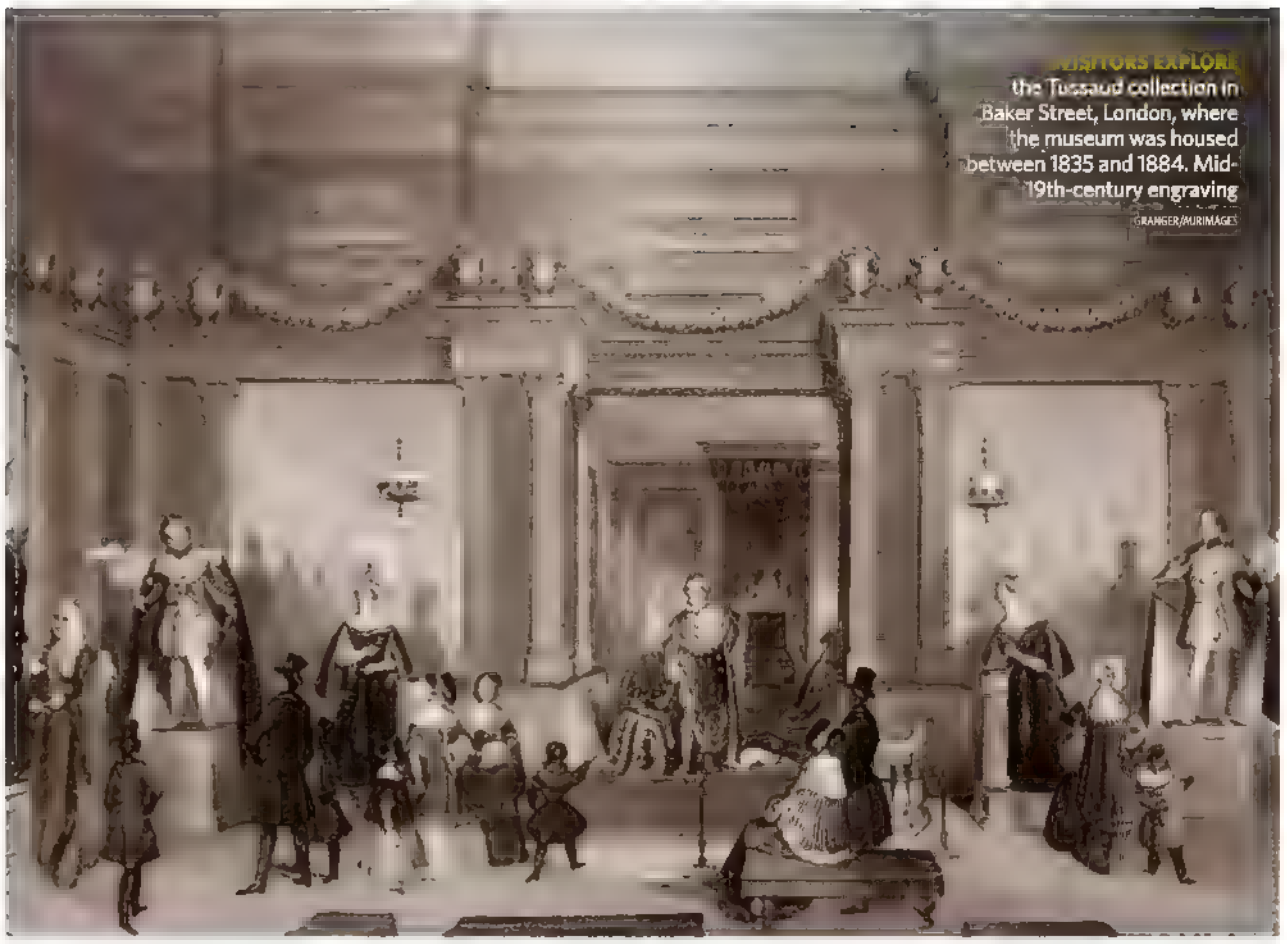
Fame and Fortune

Philippe Curtius died in September 1794 and left Marie the sole heir of his waxwork museums. A year later Marie married François Tussaud, an engineer, and later had two sons, Joseph in 1798 and François in 1800.

The marriage grew strained, and times were hard, and Tussaud's waxworks business was almost ruined by the ravages of revolution. The Madame Tussauds empire might well have never begun had she not met the German illusionist Paul Philidor. A pioneer in the use of the "magic lantern," which projected colored slides of ghosts and ghouls, Philidor mounted elaborate spectacles known as phantasmagoria. The public was ripe for this kind of new sensory experience and clamored for more.

Philidor suggested to Tussaud that they combine his projections with her wax figures to create a joint show for the Lyceum Theater in London. She agreed, and in 1802 traveled to England, to try her luck in a land untouched by turmoil. She was, however, disappointed with the show, complaining that Philidor was failing to promote her startling, lifelike figures. Toughened by the years of danger and revolution in France, this slightly built woman, now in her 40s, decided to go into business for herself and strike out alone in a new country.

Loading her precious waxworks into rail carriages, Madame Tussaud set off on a touring exhibition around the British Isles that would last, on and off, for a period of nearly 30 years. Free of Philidor and relying on her own entrepreneurial instincts, Tussaud met with instant fame. The French Revolution and the Reign of Terror awoke fascination, repugnance, and pity in the British, and Tussaud's creations—Marat stabbed in his bath, the doomed King Louis, and even a model of a guillotine—brought her public face-to-face with the 19th-century equivalent of virtual reality.



VISITORS EXPLORE the Tussaud collection in Baker Street, London, where the museum was housed between 1835 and 1884. Mid-19th-century engraving

GRANGER/AURIMAGES

In every city Madame Tussaud found sumptuous salons where her waxworks were put on display. The exhibits attracted paying visitors at a time when public exhibitions of this kind were rarely found outside London. The tours were very popular and profitable. Although Tussaud was estranged from her husband, she still sent money to him and their younger son François in Paris.

She learned, however, that her husband was squandering all the money she sent, to the point that François was later forced to sell the part of the waxwork collection that remained in Paris. In 1822 young François came to London for good, joining his mother and brother Joseph. A trained carpenter, François was a good fit in the family business, carving wooden arms and legs for his mother's wax figures. From this point, the exhibition was renamed and became known as Madame Tussaud and Sons

A Legacy in Likenesses

In 1835 Marie and her sons gave the collection a home in London on Baker Street. By then, executions were no longer public and the so-called Separate Room—later dubbed the Chamber of Horrors by the satirical magazine *Punch*—offered a tantalizing, if simulated, alternative for ghoulish Londoners. The popularity of the museum was given an extra boost in 1837 when young Queen Victoria allowed her likeness to be fashioned. The resulting waxwork was dressed in an exact replica of her coronation attire and became the exhibition centerpiece.

The quiet Frenchwoman, who nevertheless is said to have made death masks from executed London criminals, died in her sleep in April 1850 at age 88. Her sons and grandsons carried on the business. In 1884 her grandson Joseph moved the exhibition to a larger space in Marylebone Road. Although a fire in 1925 and aerial bombing during World War II caused serious damage to the collection, some of the original figures were spared.

Madame Tussauds has become a global brand, one of the most visited attractions in London, with 24 branches across the world, including seven in the United States. In 2016, following complaints by visitors, the Chamber of Horrors in London was closed. Inspired by the crowds who came to see the model of Queen Victoria in the 1830s, Marie Tussaud's successors have tirelessly produced figures to cater to the public demand for famous figures, recently modeling actor Eddie Redmayne and Prince Harry's bride, Meghan, Duchess of Sussex. Even if the ghoulish side of her work is waning in popularity, Marie Tussaud's instinct for celebrity is still proving a winning ticket.

—Enric H. March

Bigger Is Better: Rome's Giant Marble Map

The "Forma Urbis," a wall-size map of Rome, was a cartographic masterpiece on a scale never before seen.

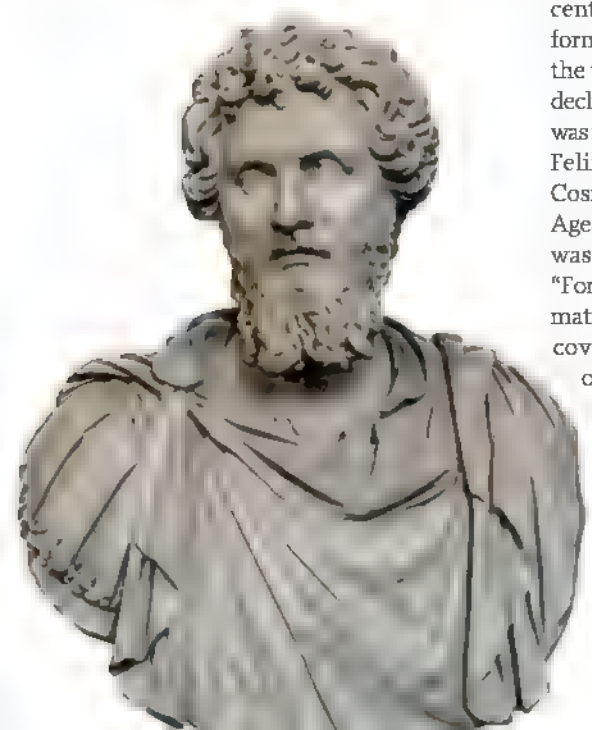
Work on Rome's Temple of Peace began in the late first century A.D., undertaken by Emperor Vespasian to commemorate his conquest of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The temple stood for centuries and later served as an administrative center for the urban prefecture, the body tasked with keeping order in the city.

During the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus, in the first years of the third century, civil servants worked in the large main chamber, dominated by one of the most extraordinary maps ever produced: A huge marble street plan of Rome known as the "Forma Urbis Romae."

Taking up an entire wall and measuring 60 feet wide and 43 feet high, it depicted Rome's urban landmarks across five square miles, from grand temples to humble warehouses. Aside from their practical functions, maps are also statements of power—in the case of the "Forma Urbis," spectacularly so. Just as the temple that housed it was built to project the might of Vespasian, this massive map emphasized how every nook and cranny of the city was known to its ruler.

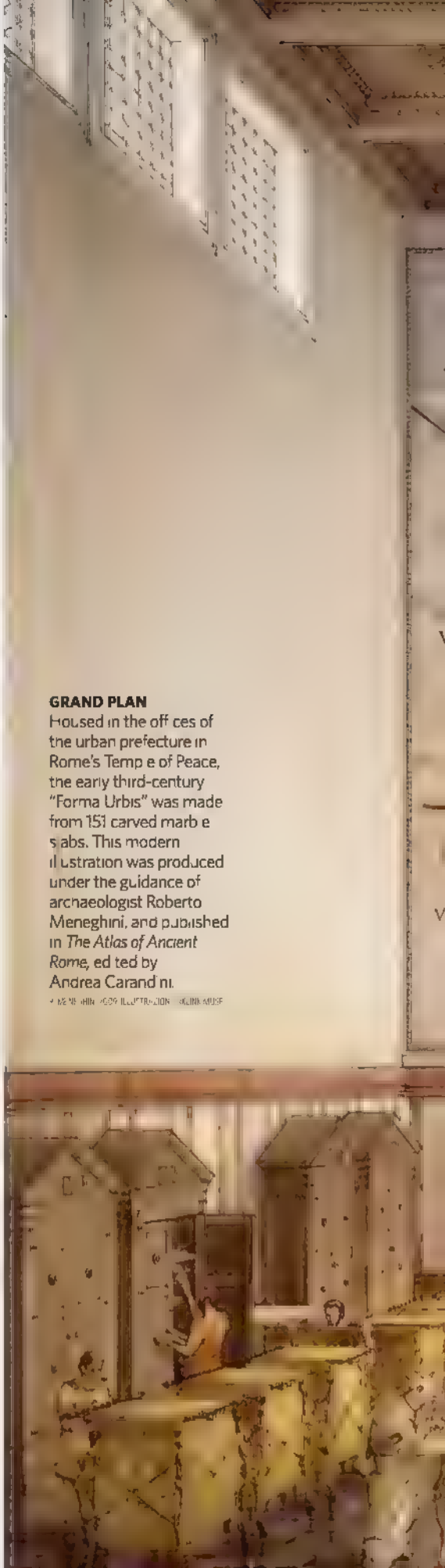
Puzzle Pieces

Originally constructed from 151 marble blocks, the "Forma Urbis" fascinates and exasperates historians. For many centuries, it has only existed in the form of a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. After the turmoil of Rome's fifth-century decline, the temple wall where the map was mounted was incorporated by Pope Felix IV into the Basilica of Santi Cosma e Damiano. By the late Middle Ages the rest of the original structure was a ruin, with huge chunks of the "Forma Urbis" purloined for building materials. Many fragments were recovered during the Renaissance—only to be lost again, although the contents of some survive in the form of engravings. Today only



EMPEROR SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS, DURING WHOSE REIGN THE "FORMA URBIS" WAS CREATED IN THE EARLY THIRD CENTURY A.D. GLYPTOTHEK, MUNICH, GERMANY

PRISMA/ALBUM



GRAND PLAN
Housed in the offices of the urban prefecture in Rome's Temple of Peace, the early third-century "Forma Urbis" was made from 151 carved marble slabs. This modern illustration was produced under the guidance of archaeologist Roberto Meneghini, and published in *The Atlas of Ancient Rome*, edited by Andrea Carandini.

MENEGHINI, 2009 ILLUSTRATION - SKIRA MUSE

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THE TEMPLE OF PEACE, part of Rome's Imperial Forums, as it looks today. Seven of its columns were restored in 2015-16.

RICCARDO ALICI

about 10 to 12 percent of the map is physically accounted for, and even that portion exists in nearly 2,000 fragments.

In the 18th century many of the pieces were transferred to the city's Capitoline Museums. Interest in the remarkable artifact was revived, and the painstaking process to reunite as many of its many pieces as possible began.

FRAGMENT SHOWING PART OF ROME'S SOUTHERLY AVENTINE HILL. CAPITOLINE MUSEUMS, ROME

ROMA, SOVRINTENDENZA CAPITOLINA AI BENI CULTURALI

Today, the enormity of this labor can be examined at the click of a mouse on the website of the Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project. Images of the 1,186 map fragments are viewable online, as well as descriptions of the information on each piece. For example, fragment 18a—a section of the Roman Forum—includes this information:

> *[The] horizontal wall of the [Temple of Castor's] podium is drawn as a double line. The columns were carved in outline and recessed; they would also have been filled with red inscription paint . . . and so would have stood out among the mass of single red-painted lines on the Plan."*

Unlike the Temple of Castor, the walls of humbler buildings appear as single lines. Although fountains, gardens, walls, columns, and even interior stairs are clearly marked, geographic details appear without inscription. The Tiber River, for example, appears as a blank space. Archaeologists theorize that perhaps it was originally painted blue to indicate a water feature

Marble Mapmakers

The map was most likely created during the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus who ruled from A.D. 193 to his death in 211. An inscription found on a map fragment notes that he is reigning. A depiction on

ROME
Roman Forum
TEMPLUM PACIS (TEMPLE OF PEACE)
Colosseum
AVENTINE HILL
Horrea Lolliana (warehouses)
LUIS CHEKAWOLAT
Mixing Business With Pleasure
THIS FRAGMENT of the "Forma Urbis" (right) belongs to the collection of Rome's Capitoline Museums. It shows the Emporium district, Rome's river port near Aventine Hill. A series of ① riverside warehouses are marked with the word *Horrea Lolliana* (*horrea* means "warehouses"). They were organized around two central courtyards where goods were unloaded and sorted. But it was not all work: Two streets above is ② a colonnaded structure, identified by some scholars as a *collegium*, a kind of guild, perhaps for dockworkers. ③ Semicircular walls may have been baths where guild members relaxed and socialized.
1
2
3
ROMA, SOVRINTENDENZA CAPITOLINA AI BENI CULTURALI

the map of the Septizodium, a facade with niches for statues, was dedicated in 203, which puts the map's creation sometime between 203 and 211.

Archaeologists have established that the map was created by first mounting marble slabs on the temple wall and then carving them in situ. The map was designed to the standard Roman scale of 1:240. It also followed the standard orientation of the day with southeast at the top of the map rather than north.

Due to the map's location in the urban prefecture offices, it was traditionally thought that the plan was used to levy taxes on real estate. Roman civil servants certainly had such maps, but these were usually in the form of scrolls, and historians now believe the "Forma Urbis" served no purpose as a working record. Details on its upper part could not be seen from the ground. It also lacked measurements and other vital data for tax collection.

What seems more likely is that this remarkable plan, which may have been based on previous large-scale Roman models, was very accurate but mostly symbolic. Made from the costly material associated with grand public buildings, its record of Rome's monuments was a monument in itself, a source of civic pride and awe to all who saw it

—Antonio Monterroso Checa

The "Forma Urbis," which may have been based on previous large-scale Roman models, was very accurate but mostly symbolic.

Learn more

Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project
https://formaurbis.stanford.edu

Killer in the Rye: St. Anthony's Fire

Signs of St. Anthony's fire were easy to see: seizures, hallucinations, and blackened limbs. Medieval Europeans believed its cause to be spiritual, but the true cause was far more earthly.

The 17th-century French historian, François Eudes de Mézeray, chronicled a plague that swept through southern France in the 10th century: "The afflicted thronged to the churches and invoked the saints. The cries of those in pain and the shedding of burned-up limbs alike excited pity; the stench of rotten flesh was unbearable." Throughout the Middle Ages, many outbreaks occurred, some taking tens of thousands of lives. Symptoms included convulsions, hallucinations, and excruciating burning sensations in the limbs. Dubbed *ignis sacer*, holy fire, the affliction blackened the limbs until they fell off at the joint.

Common wisdom of the time held that the sickness was spiritual and that divine intervention could treat it. Special hospitals were set up, manned by monks of St. Anthony of Egypt, famous for his spiritual strength in the face of torment from the devil. The terrible condition was then associated with the saint, and became known as St. Anthony's fire.

Fire Starter

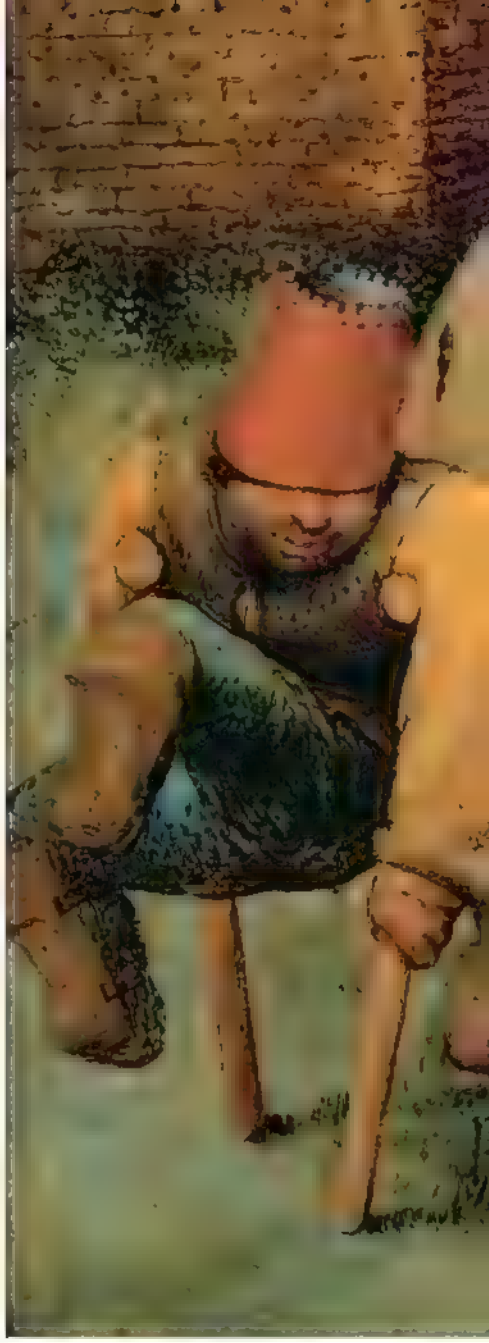
In the 18th and 19th centuries science revealed that the condition is caused by eating grain infected with a fungus, *Claviceps purpurea*. Infected plants bear black growths resembling a rooster's spurs (*ergot* in French), giving the condition its modern name: ergotism.

When ingested, ergot produces toxic alkaloids that cut off the blood supply to the body's extremities, turning the limbs gangrenous and creating the hellish sights described by Mézeray. Symptoms emerged when people ate the grain or any foodstuffs made from it. Cows are also affected by ergot. Accounts describe how their hooves and tails turned gangrenous, milk production stopped, and death typically followed. Outbreaks of St. Anthony's fire caused widespread devastation to rural communities

There is evidence that ancient people were aware of the condition's association with grain. An Assyrian tablet from the seventh century B.C. refers to pustules on an ear of grain, while holy Zoroastrian texts in Persia refer to grasses that caused pregnant women to miscarry or die in childbirth, another of the poison's dreaded effects.

In medieval Europe increased rye cultivation and consumption, mostly by the poor, exposed large parts of the population to the risk of contracting St. Anthony's fire. Ergotism did not affect all of Europe in equal measure. It is now known that *Claviceps purpurea* spores proliferate where there is cool, damp weather when grain ripens, conditions particularly prevalent in large areas of central Europe.

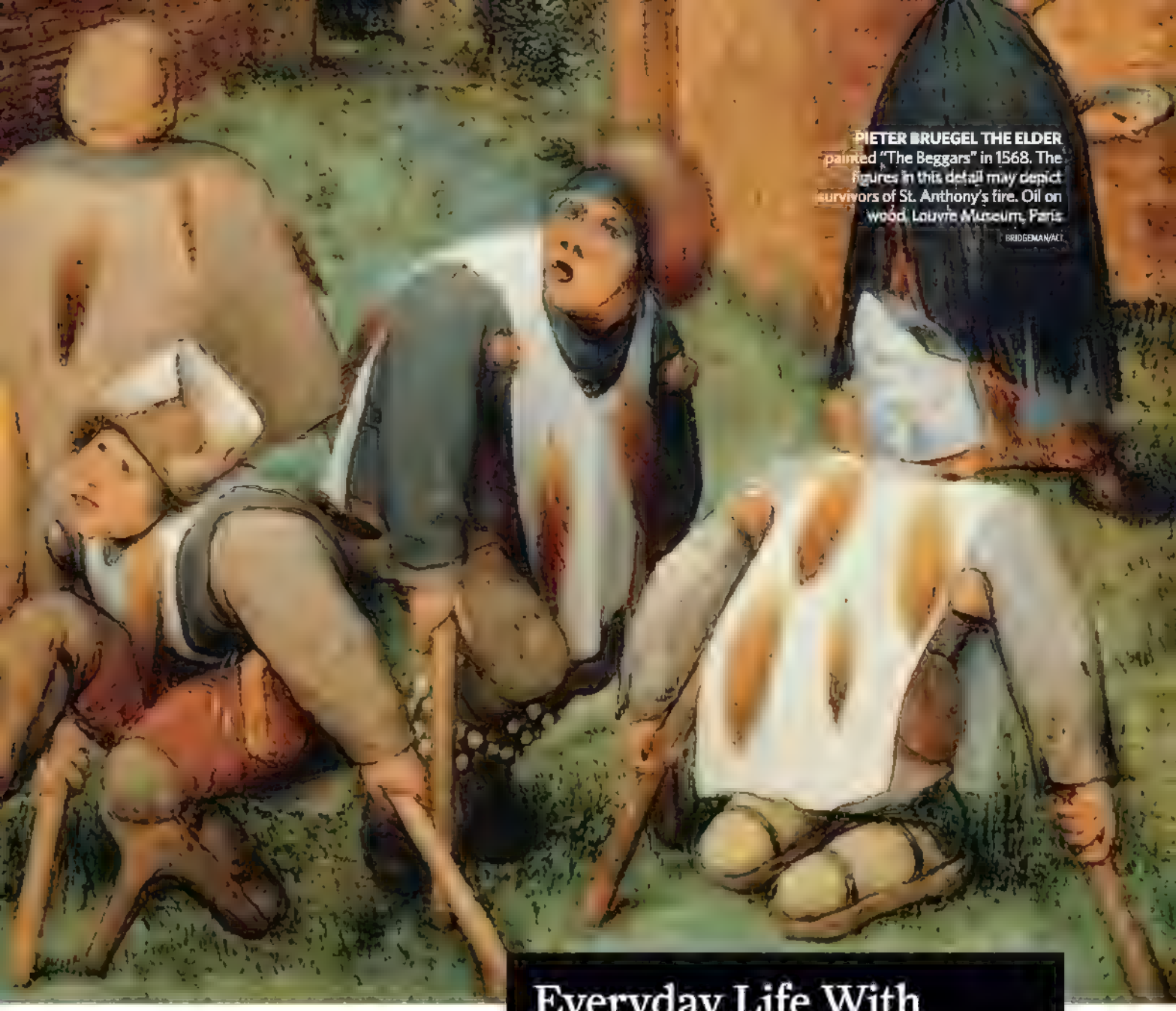
In the ninth century a devastating outbreak of gangrenous ergotism killed tens of thousands in the Rhine Valley. The



MALADIES AND MEDICINES

THE ERGOT FUNGUS *Claviceps purpurea*, seen growing on an infected rye stalk in this 1831 drawing, is deadly when ingested, but today drugs derived from it treat ailments, such as migraine headaches. The fungus is also the source of lysergic acid, from which the hallucinogen LSD is derived

FLORILEGIUS/ALBUM



PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER painted "The Beggars" in 1568. The figures in this detail may depict survivors of St. Anthony's fire. Oil on wood. Louvre Museum, Paris

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

physical burning sensation sufferers felt in their limbs linked the disease to hellfire, giving the sense that the illness had been sent down as a divine punishment.

Faith Healing

Religion became an important factor in dealing with the disease. In 1070 relics of St. Anthony of Egypt were brought from Constantinople to a small town in southeastern France, where they were looked after by Benedictine monks. Soon, the relics became associated with a miraculous cure for ergotism, marking the moment when the condition first became called St. Anthony's fire.

Everyday Life With St. Anthony's Fire

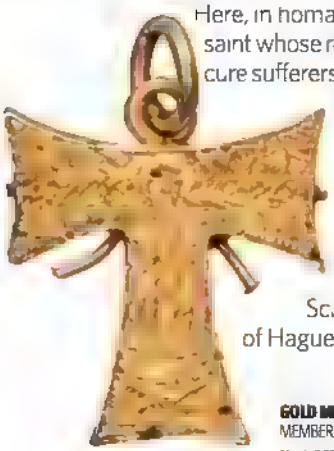
HELD IN THE LOUVRE in Paris, this small painting makes a big impact. Created in 1568 by Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder, the work is perhaps an allegory on the plight of those disabled by St. Anthony's fire.

The beggars' different hats may give the work deeper meaning, but the exact symbolism eludes modern art historians. Bruegel was fascinated by the works of Hieronymus Bosch, a 15th-century painter who often depicted disabled people in his paintings. Among the causes suggested for the injuries in the paintings are polio, cerebral palsy, and St. Anthony's fire. Bruegel's unflinching look at them reveals how the disabled would have been a regular part of village life.

DETAIL OF THE PANEL RELATED TO THE LIFE OF ST. ANTHONY ON THE ISENHEIM ALTARPIECE BY MATTHIAS GRÜNEWALD. EARLY 1500S. UNTERLINDEN MUSEUM, COLMAR, FRANCE

THE SAINT AND HIS SUFFERERS

THE MONASTIC MEMBERS of the Hospital Brothers of St. Anthony would have been a familiar sight in medieval Europe. Many wore on their habit the T-shaped St. Anthony's cross—also called a tau cross, for its similarity to the Greek letter of that name. Of the 370 or so hospitals built and run by the order across Europe, the most celebrated is that of Isenheim, near Colmar in northern France. Here, in homage to the hermit saint whose relics were said to cure sufferers of St. Anthony's fire, the monks commissioned a great altarpiece for the monastery hospital's chapel in the early 1500s. Sculpted by Niclaus of Haguenau and painted by Matthias Grünewald, the masterpiece is today housed in the Unterlinden Museum in nearby Colmar. A panel (above) shows the saint learning humility from an older hermit monk (right). In the left panel, the saint is assailed by hellish creatures who test his resolve to stay true to Christ. A tormented figure in medieval garb (lower left) may bear symptoms of ergotism—a reminder that faith could deliver Isenheim's patients from their physical anguish, as their saint had been delivered from his spiritual suffering.



GOLD MEDICINE CAPSULE IN THE FORM OF A ST. ANTHONY'S (OR TAU) CROSS, PERHAPS USED BY MEMBERS OF THE ORDER. IN ENGLAND. CIRCA 1485. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

SCALA, FLORENCE

St. Anthony, also known as St. Anthony the Great, was a religious hermit of the third and fourth centuries A.D., credited with inspiring Christian monasticism in Egypt. According to his biographer, he began practicing asceticism as a young man and retreated to live alone on a mountain for roughly 20 years. During this time, Christian tradition holds that the devil presented Anthony with a series of temptations—some carnal, others seductive, and some horrifying—but Anthony's faith granted him the strength to resist them all.

In the 11th century Guérin la Valloire, a young French nobleman, was suffering from St. Anthony's fire. He recovered from the dreaded affliction and credited his renewed health to the saint's relics; he and his father founded what would become the monastic order of the Hospital Brothers of St. Anthony around 1095. The condition's association with

PILGRIMS' PROGRESS The ruins of the Monastery of St. Anthony in Castrojeriz, Spain, on the busy medieval pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela

St. Anthony was further strengthened because the vivid hallucinations induced by ergot poisoning were linked to the visions shown to Anthony by the devil.

By the end of the 15th century the monks had built roughly 370 hospitals across Europe, with locations in France, Flanders, Germany, Spain, and Italy to treat outbreaks of St. Anthony's fire. The brothers were also instrumental in caring for those infected with the Black Death in the 1300s. In France the hospitals were known as *hôpitaux des démembrés,* hospitals of the dismembered, reflecting the custom whereby sufferers would display their amputated limbs at the entrance, as offerings. The disease particularly affected the poor, who ate substantial amounts of inexpensive rye bread. The relative success of these well-endowed hospitals may be attributed to feeding their patients bread made from uninfected grains, like wheat or other cereals.

The monks also applied a topical, lard-based ointment called St. Anthony's water to affected areas. This treatment was often imbued with medicinal plants, like different varieties of nightshade. They also prescribed drinking St. Anthony's wine. Considered a powerful antidote to the disease, it was made from grapes at the abbey near Vienne in France where the saint's relics were housed. Their presence was believed to infuse the miraculous vintage with healing properties.

The Fire Dies Down

Outbreaks of similar conditions were often attributed to ergotism. In Germany, Italy, and Flanders in the 15th and 16th centuries, whole populations started to dance uncontrollably. Called St. John's dance, St. Vitus' dance, and tarantism, the condition, like St. Anthony's fire, was associated with demons and devils. One modern theory links the dance mania to rye poisoning as well. But this notion is problematic, in part because it occurred in communities where rye was—and was not—eaten. Ergotism is also thought to be a cause of the witchcraft scares, particularly in the 17th-century Salem Witch Hunt in colonial Massachusetts, although this theory has been challenged as well. Curiously, as North America was persecuting witches, a French physician, Thuillier, definitively linked rye ergot fungus with the condition in 1670.

Outbreaks of St. Anthony's fire began to die down as wheat replaced rye and became more widespread throughout the 1800s; however, ergotism didn't disappear completely. Almost 12,000 people were infected in 1926 in the Soviet Union, and Ethiopia and India experienced outbreaks in the late 20th century.

—Ángel Sánchez Crespo

FAITH AND FIRE

THE TEACHINGS OF ZARATHUSTRA

Three thousand years ago, a powerful creed emerged in ancient Iran when its founder, Zarathustra, began teaching about the one good god, Ahura Mazda. An elusive figure in history, Zarathustra becomes clearly visible as the center of a monotheistic faith whose influence on other major religions is undeniable.

JUAN ANTONIO ÁLVAREZ-PEDROSA NÚÑEZ

HOLY FIRE

A permanent flame, a rich and sacred symbol for the followers of Zarathustra, burns in the Zoroastrian Atashgah ("fire temple"), built near Baku, Azerbaijan, between the 17th and 19th centuries.

— PETER LANGER/AGE FOTOSTOCK

The Fortunes of a Faith

1700-1200 B.C.
The Gathas, hymns attributed to the prophet **Zarathustra,** are thought to have been written. Mainstream scholarship considers that Zarathustra lived toward the later part of this period.

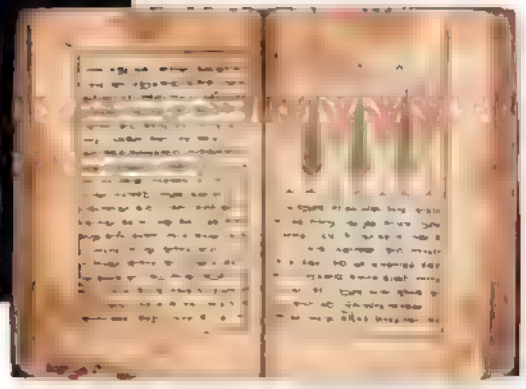
539 B.C.
Persian king **Cyrus the Great** conquers Babylon. He is influenced by Zoroastrianism—whose tenets also influence the Hebrews—which will later become Persia's official religion.

330 B.C.
Alexander the Great conquers the Achaemenian Empire by toppling Darius III. Scholars believe many sacred texts are destroyed in the conquest, and Zoroastrianism will decline during Hellenic rule.

A.D. 241-272
Under Shapur I, Zoroastrianism reemerges as an official, imperial religion at the heart of the **Sasanian** Persian empire. The building of fire temples begins during this period.

Circa third century A.D.
The Sasanian kings oversee the assembly and standardization of the **Avesta.** This work will continue until the seventh century.

A.D. 675
The Arabs conquer the Sasanian Empire, beginning centuries of persecution and dispersal of Zoroastrians, who begin to flee to other lands.



RESTORATION
Illustrations grace a 1647 copy (below) of the Vendidad Sade, from the Zoroastrian holy book, the Avesta. Much of the original Avesta was destroyed during the invasion of Alexander the Great, and was partially re-created under the Sasanian Persians.
AKG/ALBUM

The fires of Zoroastrianism began burning thousands of years ago in ancient Persia after a mysterious man preached a new faith. His name was Zarathustra (called Zoroaster by the Greeks), and he taught that there was one true god, a lord of heaven and light named Ahura Mazda. Believed to be one of the world's earliest monotheistic religions, Zoroastrianism spread throughout the Persian Empire and would become the official faith of its rulers. Zoroastrian symbols and motifs adorned the capital cities of Pasargadae and then Persepolis. Its emblems can be seen on the graves of the Persian Achaemenian kings, whose empire (from the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C.) was the greatest in the world at that time.

From the faith's earliest days, sacred rituals centered on fire. The flames symbolized purity, warmth, illumination, and enlightenment—the goodness of Ahura Mazda. As Zoroastrianism grew, fire temples were built with carefully tended, sacred hearths.

KINGS AT REST
Numerous Zoroastrian images, including that of the sole deity Ahura Mazda, adorn the rock-cut tombs of Naqsh-e Rostam, resting place of Persia's Achaemenian and Sasanian kings.

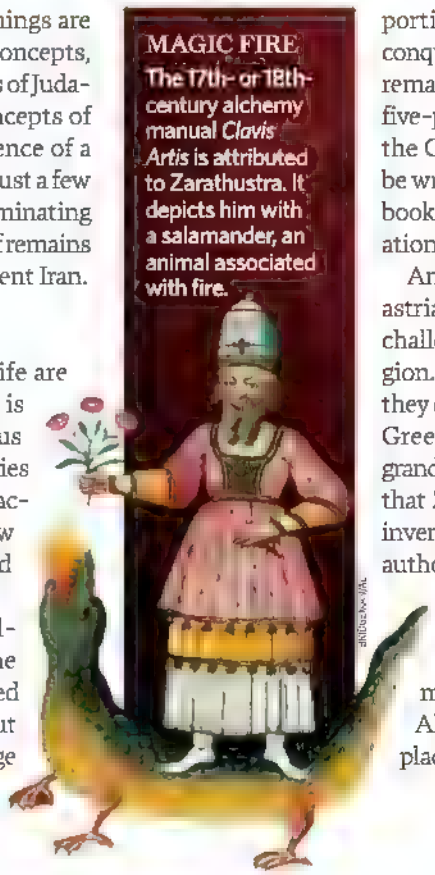
LEONID ANDRONOV/AGE FOTOSTOCK

The impacts of Zarathustra's teachings are bold and brilliant: Common beliefs, concepts, and lessons are plain to see in the tenets of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The concepts of one good god battling evil, the existence of a savior, and a day of final judgment are just a few of their shared traits. Unlike these illuminating tenets, the figure of Zarathustra himself remains a shadowy figure in the history of ancient Iran.

Books of the Prophet

Historical records of Zarathustra's life are more difficult to locate. Much of what is known about him comes from religious texts, or from historians writing centuries after his death. Finding contemporary accounts is even more challenging as few experts agree on when Zarathustra lived and died.

Zarathustra's teachings were collected in a compilation known as the Avesta. A massive tome, it was reported to be originally some 12,000 pages, but only a fraction survived. Some say large portions were lost when Alexander the Great conquered Persia in the fourth century B.C. What remained was collected and standardized into a five-part sacred text. The main section contains the Gathas, a collection of hymns believed to be written by Zarathustra during his life. Other books contain prayers, rituals, accounts of creation, and descriptions of Zoroastrian law.



MAGIC FIRE
The 17th- or 18th-century alchemy manual *Clavis Artis* is attributed to Zarathustra. It depicts him with a salamander, an animal associated with fire.

Ancient Greek and Roman studies of Zoroastrianism framed Zarathustra as a priest who challenged the polytheistic Indo-Iranian religion. While these accounts tell similar stories, they do not occur in the same time frame. Some Greek authors writing centuries later make grandiose claims for his antiquity based on ideas that Zarathustra was an alchemist or even the inventor of magic. For instance, Greco-Roman author Plutarch, writing in the first century A.D., claimed that Zarathustra lived "5,000 years before the siege of Troy."

Other historians state that he was a middle-aged man living 258 years before Alexander the Great conquered Persepolis, placing Zarathustra in the seventh century B.C.

FIRE FROM BELOW
The fire temple of Baku, Azerbaijan, sits over natural gas vents that once fueled its flames. Gas is now piped in to keep the fires lit.

SACRED HEARTH

BURNING ZEAL

Fire is a central element of the rituals performed in Zoroastrian temples, but followers of Zarathustra are at pains to dispel the popular idea that they worship the fire itself. The flame is a potent and multifaceted symbol. It represents an attribute of Ahura Mazda, the one god. It recalls the miraculous burning hearth in which the divine essence was kept alive in the home of Zarathustra's mother, and so combines both domesticity and the wonder of the heavens. It dispels the shadows of ignorance and represents justice and order. Fire temples do not feature in the older Zoroastrian scripture, and seem to have developed later in the long evolution of the faith. There are three grades of fire temple. Flames in the two lower grades of temple can be tended by lesser priests or even a layperson. However, the flame in an Atash Behram, the most important fire temple, may only be tended by a ritually purified priest. The flame is composed of 16 fire sources, including lightning, and the hearths of different sectors of society, such as soldiers and craftsmen. Sometimes known as fire cathedrals, there are only nine such places in the world today, mainly located in India.

This timing conflicts with the belief that Zarathustra composed the Gathas in northeastern Iran as early as 1700 B.C. Mary Boyce, one of the most distinguished historians of Zarathustra, opts for this dating, suggesting he lived sometime between 1400 and 1000 B.C.

The *Denkart*, a 10th-century A.D. compendium of Zoroastrian customs, lays out the cosmic narrative and Zarathustra's place in it. Three thousand years after the creation of time, Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, the embodiment of evil, make a pact to battle for 9,000 years. Six thousand years later, Zarathustra will be born and receive a revelation to bring the good religion of Ahura Mazda to the world. At the close of the 9,000 years, the last of three Saoshyants, or saviors, will appear and defeat evil once and for all. During the final battle, the dead will rise again, and Isatvastra, Zarathustra's eldest son, will preside over the last judgment.

The *Denkart* recounts how Zarathustra was conceived. An element called *khwarr*—the glory that infuses creation—descends to a family's hearth where a fire miraculously burns without

ZARATHUSTRA IN THE COURT OF KING VISHTASPA, IN A LATE 19TH-CENTURY COLORED LITHOGRAPH, PART OF A SERIES ON THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET

LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

fuel. One of the daughters, a young girl named Dugdhova, radiates this mystical element. Suspected of sorcery, she is sent away from her home. While in exile, she meets and marries a young nobleman. Other divine attributes, carried in the milk of heifers and special plants, enter the body of Dugdhova in the form of a holy drink mixed by her husband. They combine with the khwarr she already carries, and Zarathustra is conceived.

From the outset he proves to be no ordinary baby. Instead of crying when he is born, he laughs. As the boy grows, he engages in a series of combats with servants of evil. In each encounter the young Zarathustra is saved by divine intervention.

A Prophet and Teacher

At the age of 30—the age when, according to the Bible, Jesus began to preach—Zarathustra enters a river to ritually cleanse himself. On emerging, he is dazzled by the presence of Ahura Mazda and becomes enlightened.

FACING TRADITION

A 19th-century, Indian illustration of Zarathustra. His features accord with a traditional, centuries-long ideal of the prophet's appearance.

In a series of encounters, he receives the divine wisdom of the good religion. He learns the knowledge concerning the judgment of men's souls, the reward and punishment for good and bad actions, and the eventual purification of the world. Here began the public life and mission of Zarathustra, but for the first 10 years he struggles and converts only one person—his cousin. He faces outward hostility from the priesthood of the dominant polytheistic religion of the day.

Zarathustra's breakthrough arrives when he wins royal favor by miraculously healing the hooves of King Vishtaspa's horse. The king converts to the new faith and becomes Zarathustra's patron and protector. Fired with zeal and confidence, Zarathustra, now in his 40s, dedicates his life to consolidating the faith that would bear his name.

Scholars point out that Vishtaspa was the name of a much later historical figure—the father of the Persian king Darius the Great, who in the sixth century B.C. made Zoroastrianism the state religion. If, as in all likelihood, Zarathustra

FINAL RESTING PLACE
A *dakhma*, also called a tower of silence, stands on a hilltop on the outskirts of the Iranian city of Yazd, where Zoroastrians once laid their unburied dead. Believing corpses to be unclean, the faithful exposed them to the elements. Although sky burial was prohibited in Iran in the 1970s, the practice continues in parts of India today.

MEMORY AND EXILE

A ROYAL REFUGE

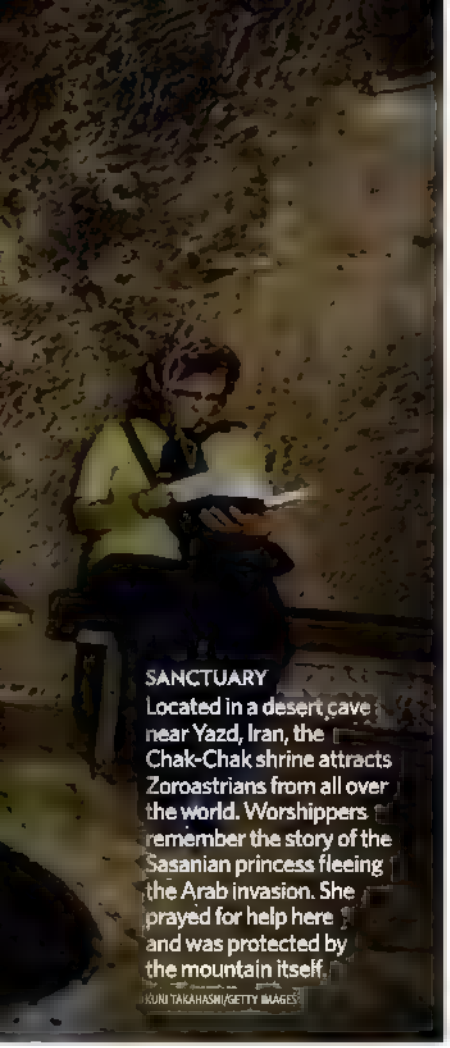
Persecution and new opportunities in other lands have led to an annual decline in Iran's Zoroastrian population. In the city of Yazd, once a thriving center of Zoroastrianism, only a couple hundred followers of Zarathustra's creed remain in a city of nearly half a million. Near Yazd is a site that symbolizes both the resilience of Iran's Zoroastrian culture, as well as an elegiac reminder of how this ancient creed has weathered centuries of prejudice and persecution. In the desert, some 60 miles from Yazd, lies the Zoroastrian shrine of Pir-e Sabz, a cave inside an otherwise barren mountain. Nicknamed "Chak-Chak" for the sound of water dripping from a nearby spring, it is the setting of a poignant legend. In the seventh century, as the last Sasanian king, Yazdegerd III, fled before invading Muslim hosts, his daughter found refuge here. Encircled by her enemies, the princess prayed to Ahura Mazda for deliverance. Her prayers were answered, and she was taken into the heart of the mountain where the shrine is maintained today. The plight of her family is kept alive by the Zoroastrian Parsis of India, whose calendar counts the years since her father's reign.

existed centuries before King Darius, the conversion of Vishtaspa has all the elements of a mythical episode rather than of a historical one.

Spreading the Faith

Zoroastrianism gained popularity in the Persian Empire, and began to spread in earnest to the wider world in the sixth century B.C. In 539 B.C. Persian king Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenian Empire, conquered Babylon and freed Israelite captives who had been in exile there for nearly a century. During this time, Jewish scholars in Judaea and Babylon were developing the canon of the Hebrew Bible. Their exposure to Zoroastrian beliefs and concepts resulted in some interesting parallels between worship of Yahweh and worship of Ahura Mazda.

Cyrus's successors continued to practice Zoroastrianism. The religion received a heavy blow in 330 B.C. when Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great. Cities were sacked and many important sacred texts were lost. The religion persisted, however, and later was adopted by the rulers of the Sasanian Empire in the third century A.D.



SANCTUARY
Located in a desert cave near Yazd, Iran, the Chak-Chak shrine attracts Zoroastrians from all over the world. Worshippers remember the story of the Sasanian princess fleeing the Arab invasion. She prayed for help here and was protected by the mountain itself.

KUNI TAKAHASHI/GETTY IMAGES

PORTRAIT OF A GOD
The likeness of Zoroastrianism's supreme being, Ahura Mazda, has been found on many Persian ruins, like this relief (above) from Persepolis, an ancient capital of the Achaemenian Empire.

RICHARD ASHWORTH/AGE FOTOSTOCK

During this period Zoroastrian priests began to build fire temples to house their sacred flames. Because Ahura Mazda's fire stood for all that was good, pure, and holy, tending the fire took on greater importance during this era. Remains of many fire temples have been found throughout Iran, most dating to the Sasanian era. One of the most significant is Takht-e Soleyman ("throne of Solomon"). Built in the early to mid fifth century, it was an impressive fire temple that housed one of the great Zoroastrian fire altars. Located in a volcanic region in northwestern Iran, the fiery geography of the land perhaps enhanced its sacred status. The temples were damaged by attacks in later centuries and eventually fell into ruin, but the temple complex and its surrounding structures were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003.

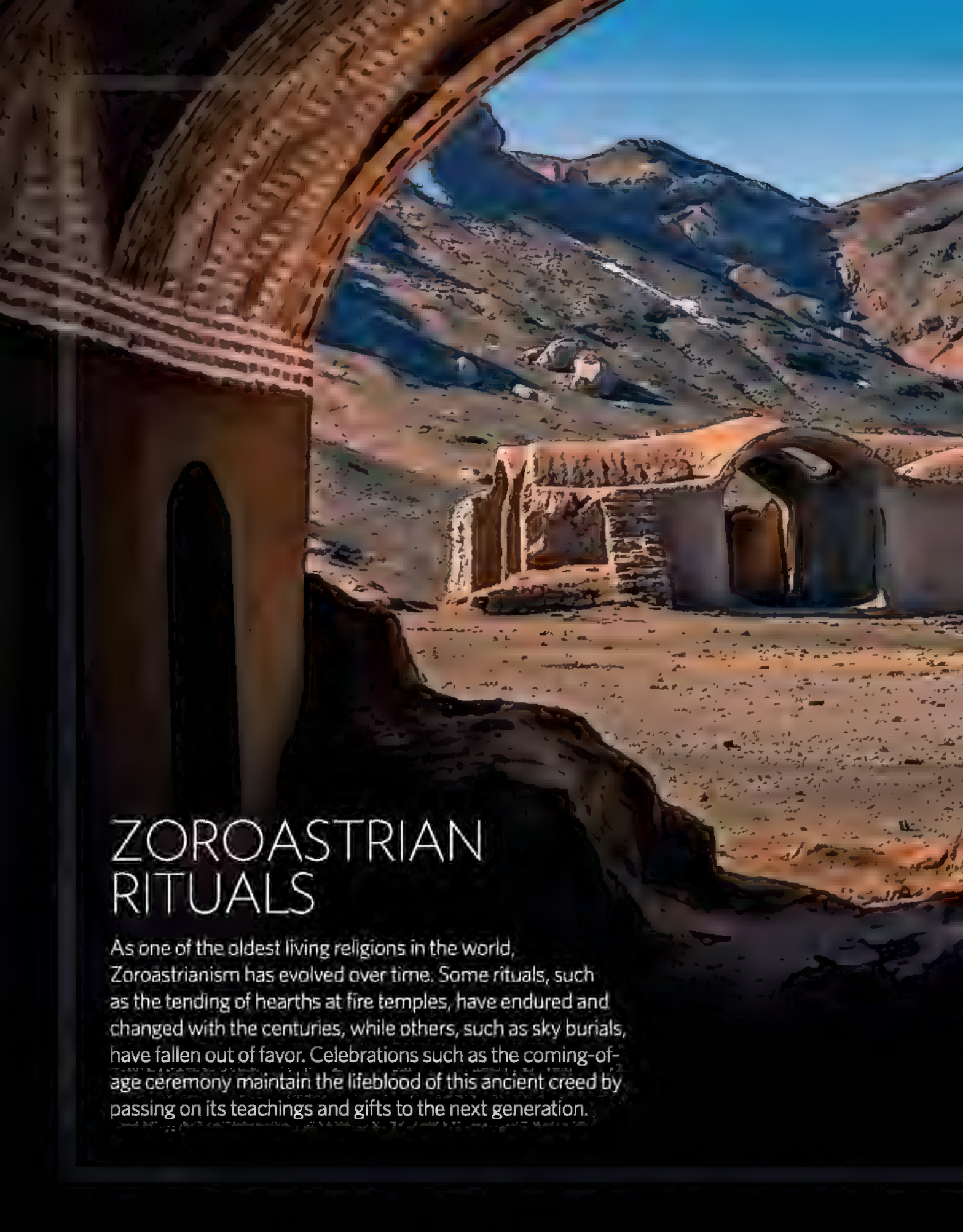
Zoroastrian dominance persisted for centuries but came to a rapid end after the Arab conquests in the seventh century. Many Zoroastrians fled from Iran and Azerbaijan to India where they continued to practice their faith. Due to restrictive laws forbidding their comingling with other faiths, their enclaves grew isolated and over time the members became known as the Parsis. Zoroastrians who stayed in Persia and other areas of Central Asia faced persecutions and discrimination, which reduced their numbers and their centers of worship.

Fires Still Burning

Although diminished since their peak, Zarathustra's fires have not been extinguished. Today Zoroastrianism is practiced by communities around the world, with the largest concentrations in Iran, India, North America, the United Kingdom, and Australasia.

Many modern congregations worship at fire temples, where they learn the centuries-old credo of Zoroastrianism: *Humata, hukhta, hvarshta:* Good thoughts, good words, good deeds. They embrace the teachings of Zarathustra—be honest, be ethical, be compassionate—and believe the promise that Ahura Mazda will ultimately vanquish evil.

JUAN ANTONIO ÁLVAREZ-PEDROSA NUÑEZ IS A SPECIALIST IN ANCIENT INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AT THE COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY MADRID, SPAIN.



ZOROASTRIAN RITUALS

As one of the oldest living religions in the world, Zoroastrianism has evolved over time. Some rituals, such as the tending of hearths at fire temples, have endured and changed with the centuries, while others, such as sky burials, have fallen out of favor. Celebrations such as the coming-of-age ceremony maintain the lifeblood of this ancient creed by passing on its teachings and gifts to the next generation.

PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE Near Yazd, Iran, are ruins of *khaiele*, places where families could gather to remember the dead. In Zoroastrianism, the bodies of the deceased were traditionally exposed to the elements on towers built atop the surrounding hills (see pp. 24-25).

PAWOPA/GETTY IMAGES

1 Holy Fire

During the Achaemenian period, Zoroastrian rituals were conducted in the open, as described by Greek historian Herodotus. Around the first century A.D., temples were first created where priests tended an eternal flame, a ritual referred to by the geographer Strabo. During the Sasanian period, Zoroastrians built temples with a platform where they maintained a fire inside an urn. The faithful would pray while looking into the flames.

A FIRE ALTAR ON A SECOND-CENTURY B.C. COIN MINTED BY THE PARTHIAN KING VAHBARZ. COIN MUSEUM, TEHRAN, IRAN

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

2 Priests

Priests were guardians of Zoroastrian communities and temples. They took on the study and oral transmission of the Avesta as well as other sacred texts and commentaries. They were also responsible for upholding the community's ethical code and resolving legal conflicts. Today's priests are divided into three different levels: the *herbad*, the *mobed*, and finally, the highest category in the Zoroastrian priestly ranking, the *dastur*.

3 Rite of Passage

There are important spiritual ceremonies that bring together the Zoroastrian community for special occasions. One of the most significant is the coming-of-age ceremony, often called Navjote or Sedreh Pushi. The ritual includes many preparatory steps and ends with the tying of a sacred white cord, the *kusti*, around the initiate's waist three times. The young person is then accepted into the faith of the elders through this rite of passage.

4 Funerary Rituals

Under Zoroastrian belief, a dead person's body is believed to be impure and could contaminate the earth or sacred fire. Originally corpses were not buried or burned; rather, they were placed on exposed high places, sometimes man-made, where scavengers could consume the remains quickly. The ancient practice of sky burial is in decline, and Zoroastrian communities are looking for alternatives, such as solar ovens that rapidly dispose of bodies without fire.

5 Sacred Drink

Drinking sacred *haoma* has played a central role in Zoroastrian liturgy since ancient times. The main ingredient is described by the Avesta as a fragrant plant with golden green leaves. The plant's juices were mixed with other ingredients, including water and milk. Ritual consumption of haoma was believed to enhance one's health and vitality. Scholars have tried to identify what this plant could be, and many believe that it is a species of ephedra.

WEIGHT OF THE CROWN
Entitled "A Man in Armor," Rembrandt van Rijn's 1655 portrait is believed to depict Alexander the Great, shown here as a young but somber figure—brooding and pensive. Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, Scotland
AKG-IMAGES

Murder Among Macedons

THE ALEXANDER CONSPIRACIES

Alexander the Great watched his star rising brightly but was blind to the growing darkness in his regime. Plots of murder, both real and imagined, consumed his thoughts, turning Alexander against his former comrades in arms.

JUAN PABLO SÁNCHEZ

THE CAPTURE OF BABYLON
"Entry of Alexander Into Babylon," a 1665 canvas by Charles Le Brun, at the Louvre Museum, Paris (above), shows the surrender of Babylon by the Persian satrap Mazaeus, which spared Alexander the need to take the city by force.

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

GENERATION GAP

HAVING ROUTED DARIUS at Gaugamela, Alexander enjoyed a warm welcome in Babylon, hosted by Mazaeus, the Persian satrap (regional governor). Although Alexander considered Babylon to be the seat of his new government in Asia, he allowed Mazaeus to continue in his position as satrap, with some powers curtailed. This decision was key to Alexander cementing power, but some of his Macedon followers were resentful of Mazaeus, who had fought against them at the Battle of Gaugamela. The incident marked a continuing trend: Alexander built up a parallel court of satraps and eunuchs, introduced Asian rituals into court, and later married a Bactrian princess, Roxana. His entourage of Macedons, older men who had fought for Alexander's father, Philip II, began to resent this behavior on both generational and cultural grounds.

Alexander the Great's accomplishments in the fourth century B.C. were breathtaking. The son of a powerful king and an ambitious queen, Alexander was born in 356 B.C. He studied under Aristotle until age 16 and became king of Macedon at age 20. In his 13-year rule, Alexander united ancient Greece, conquered Persia, seized Egypt, and created an empire stretching from Europe to Asia. He fancied himself the descendant of Achilles and the son of Zeus.

As Alexander's power grew, so did his fear of losing it. At times megalomaniacal and paranoid, he began to see threats everywhere, including among those closest to him. He believed they envied him. He believed they wanted his power. He believed they wanted him dead.

Bold Beginnings

Alexander's brilliant start won him many loyal followers, comrades in arms who helped him on his quick rise to glory. In 334 B.C. Alexander's forces advanced unfaltering across Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) and invaded the Achaemenian

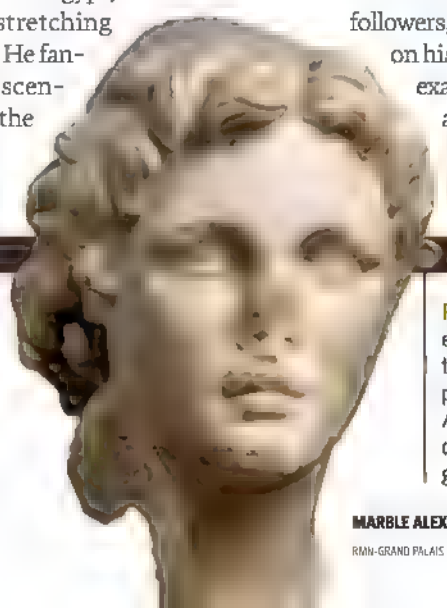
334 B.C.

Alexander invades the Persian Empire, led by Darius III. Alexander's victory at Gaugamela in 331 will lead to Darius's overthrow.

PLOTS TO KILL THE KING

330 B.C.

Philotas, commander of the elite Companion cavalry, is tried, tortured, and executed for allegedly participating in a murder conspiracy. Alexander then orders the death of Philotas's father, the respected general Parmenio.



MARBLE ALEXANDER BUST, SECOND CENTURY B.C., LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

RMN-GRAND PALAIS

(Persian) Empire. They scored two victories: the first near the Granicus River near the site of Troy, and the second in Issus.

Having rejected an offer of a truce from an increasingly rattled Darius III, leader of Persia, Alexander entered Persia-controlled Egypt in 332 B.C. He was received there as a liberator from the Persian overlords, and founded Alexandria, the most famous of the cities that he would name for himself. Journeying far into the desert near the modern-day border with Libya, Alexander had a brush with divinity that only stoked his sense of omnipotence. The young king and his men slogged through the desert to the Siwa Oasis, home of the oracle of Amun—associated by the Greeks with Zeus—whose starstruck priests proclaimed him the god's son.

Brimming with confidence, Alexander went on to defeat Darius for the third and final time at Gaugamela (near Arbil in modern Iraq) in 331 B.C. Following this victory, accompanied by his generals, Alexander took Persia from Darius III and added more land to his expanding empire. Still hungry for more, Alexander continued his campaign east. Cities fell to him, one after the other. He took control of Babylon, Susa, and other capitals of the Achaemenian Empire, and with them their vast wealth.

EASTERN ODYSSEY

Alexander's eight-year campaign from Anatolia to the edge of India (above) not only topp ed the mighty Persian Empire but a so founded numerous, lasting cities in his name.

328 B.C.

During a banquet in Samarqand, a drunken Alexander slays his general **Cleitus the Black,** who had openly criticized Alexander's despotism and adoption of Pers an customs.

327 B.C.

Seven royal pages are charged with plotting to murder Alexander All are executed, and the court historian and Alexander's biographer, **Callisthenes,** is accused of being complicit. He is arrested and dies in prison

323 B.C.

After a session of feasting and drinking that lasts for several days, **Alexander** dies of fever in Babylon, age 32.

EGYPTIAN CARTOUCHE WITH ALEXANDER'S NAME IN HIEROGLYPHS. LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

A SKILLED NEGOTIATOR

BAGOAS, a young eunuch, first met Alexander following the death of Darius III. He had been sent on behalf of Nabarzanes, a Persian military officer who had helped slay Darius, and whom Alexander—as Darius's successor—could consider punishing as a murderer of his king. Writing in the first century A.D., Quintus Curtius Rufus recounts that Bagoas, "of uniquely lovely looks," argued successfully that Nabarzanes be pardoned and later became Alexander's lover. The implication that Alexander's judgment was swayed by Bagoas's looks was later echoed by Plutarch, who wrote of Alexander's enthusiastic response to Bagoas's dancing. Another source, Arrian of Nicomedia, however, generally portrays Alexander as able to resist his attraction to Bagoas. Some historians argue that Bagoas's plea to Alexander was strengthened by his knowledge of the case, and the fact he spoke Greek. In other words, looks aside, Bagoas was probably the best negotiator for the job.

ABOVE, BAGOAS, DEPICTED AS A WOMAN IN A GREEN DRESS IN A 15TH-CENTURY FLEMISH MINIATURE, PLEADS WITH ALEXANDER (SEATED LEFT) TO SHOW MERCY TO NABARZANES.

ALAMY/ACE

ORACLE IN THE OASIS
Ringed with palms and sited between two desert lakes, the oasis shrine of Amun-Zeus at Siwa, near Egypt's border with Libya, was visited by Alexander in 331 B.C.

MICHEL BARET/GETTY IMAGES

Soon after the victory at Gaugamela, Darius III was assassinated in 330 by one of his own provincial governors, or satraps. As Alexander began consolidating power, he adopted Persian customs, a move which many of his Greek compatriots found insulting. Alexander's magnificent victories had not been won single-handedly. These close friends and companions—Ptolemy, Craterus, Cleitus the Black, loyal Hephaestion, and the grizzled general Parmenio—had been at his side throughout the Asiatic campaign.

Parmenio and Philotas

A Macedon of long-standing noble lineage, Parmenio had been a right-hand man to Alexander's father and then served as second-in-command to Alexander. He enjoyed close bonds with both the court and the army. Already in his 70s, Parmenio had several sons who served under Alexander. The oldest, Philotas, was perhaps the most outstanding. Alexander had chosen him to command the *hetairoi,* or Companion cavalry, an elite corps formed entirely from members of the Macedon nobility

Philotas had a reputation for bravery and hard work as well as being a generous and loyal friend. Some thought him arrogant and were suspicious, and perhaps envious, of his accomplishments. Philotas didn't always agree with Alexander and had been a vocal critic at times, especially of the way the king had been hailed as a god in Egypt.

Some of Alexander's generals, led by Craterus, heard whispers that Philotas could be plotting against Alexander. They ordered spies to keep tabs on him, but the only account of treasonous talk they found came from a Greek prostitute. She told them that Philotas bragged to her about how he and Parmenio were responsible for Alexander's victories. Craterus reported his findings to Alexander, who did not give much credence to pillow talk. He trusted Philotas and also did not want conflict with Parmenio, whom he had long trusted.

In 330 B.C. whispers revealed another treasonous plot of Philotas, except this time assassination was involved. While wintering with his army at Phrada (modern-day Farah in Afghanistan), Alexander learned that a man named Dymnus, a member of the hetairoi, planned to murder him. An informant, the brother of Dymnus's lover, had twice told Philotas of the plot, but Philotas had done nothing. Finally, the informant went directly to Alexander to expose Dymnus.

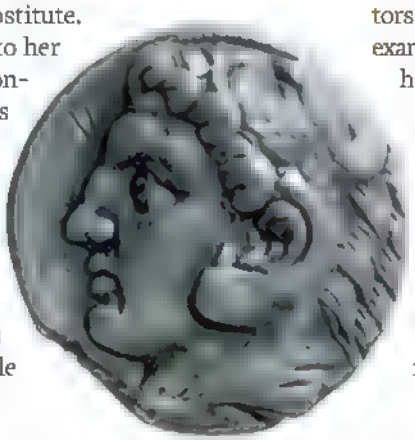
Before he could be arrested, Dymnus killed himself, leaving many mysteries unresolved. Alexander, convinced of his guilt, had Dymnus's corpse publicly displayed to warn potential traitors. Having grown suspicious of his friend, Alexander then called on Philotas to answer why he had not reported the plot to his leader.

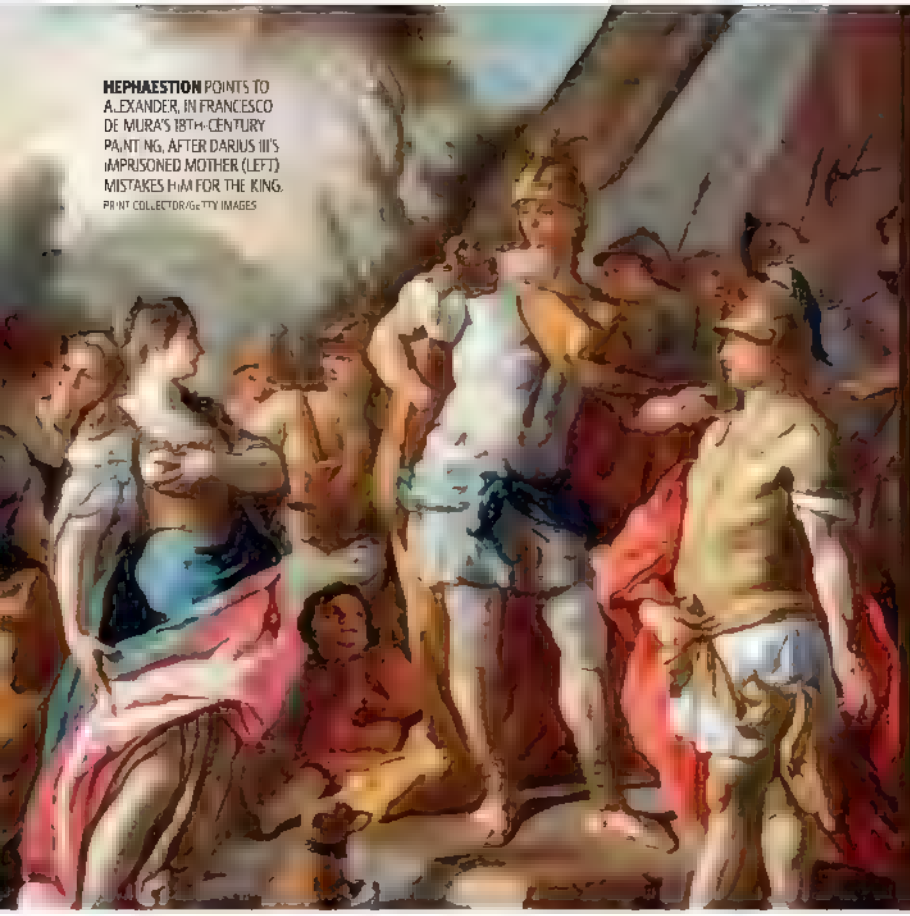
Philotas denied being part of a plot to kill Alexander, arguing that the allegations had seemed trivial, the result of a lover's quarrel. Writing his *Histories of Alexander the Great* around the first century A.D., Roman author Quintus Curtius Rufus reported how Philotas threw his arms around Alexander and begged him "to have regard to his past life rather than to a fault,

COIN OF A KING

Struck in the fourth century B.C. in Babylon, this silver tetradrachm (below) bears the strong profile of Alexander the Great.

DRONOZ/ALBUM





HEPHAESTION POINTS TO ALEXANDER, IN FRANCESCO DE MURA'S 18TH-CENTURY PAINTING, AFTER DARIUS III'S IMPRISONED MOTHER (LEFT) MISTAKES HIM FOR THE KING.
PRINT COLLECTOR/GETTY IMAGES

BROTHERS IN ARMS

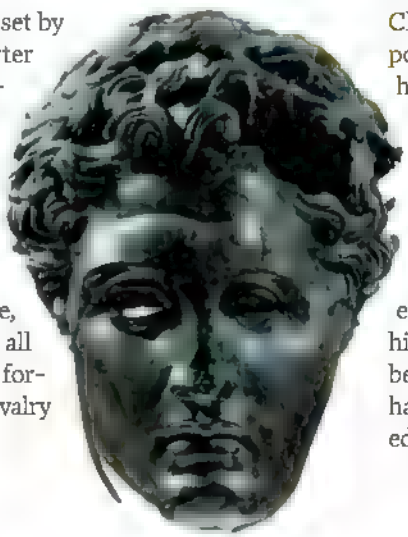
HEPHAESTION had been Alexander's close friend from childhood, probably taught by Aristotle alongside the young prince. The two were close in age, with sources putting Hephaestion's birth in 357 or 356 B.C., and some historians believe the two were lovers as young men. One popular account puts the comrades near the river Granicus in Anatolia (modern Turkey) on the way to battle the Persian army in 334. Alexander visited the tomb of Achilles, his alleged ancestor, while Hephaestion paid his respects to Patroclus, Achilles' dear companion. The two were said to look so alike that they were often mistaken for one another. Hephaestion stayed in Alexander's favor throughout his career. His sudden death in 324 B.C. deeply affected Alexander, who openly mourned his lifelong friend.

which, after all was only one of silence." Philotas agreed to let the army determine his fate.

Alexander called an assembly of the Macedon army to judge him. In front of them all, Craterus accused Philotas not only of having kept the murder plot secret but of actually having instigated it. After hearing all the arguments, the army considered the evidence: They found Philotas guilty of treason and sentenced him to death for his treachery.

Alexander's inner circle was too beset by ambition and jealousy to let the matter end with Philotas's death. Hephaestion took the floor and proposed that they torture the condemned before executing him, in order to find out who else was involved. Hephaestion, Craterus, and others tortured Philotas all night, until his will was broken. They forced him, again under torture, to give details of the alleged plot and all those involved. The following day the former commander of the Companion cavalry was stoned to death.

TRUSTED COMPANION
A bronze head of Hephaestion (below), believed to have been made in 323 B.C. Prado Museum, Madrid
DEA/ALBUM



Out With the Old

Paranoia, intrigue, and ambition had won the day. From that moment, there were no more trials. The ranks of the army were simply purged, leaving no one with any doubt that perceived disloyalty would be punished. Alexander knew that promotions could shore up his power. If Hephaestion had sought Philotas's downfall to secure his own advancement, he was successful: The king made him joint commander with Cleitus the Black of the Companion cavalry, the position previously held by Philotas. Cleitus had saved Alexander's life during the battle at Granicus and was well connected with the men who served under Alexander's father. But, like Philotas, Cleitus had criticized Alexander's autocratic aspirations, and Alexander wanted him where he could be easily controlled.

Following Philotas's execution, Alexander embarked on what some scholars believe is his darkest deed. Alexander, perhaps paranoid, believed that there was no way Philotas could have plotted against him without the knowledge of his father, Parmenio. He also knew that

BEGGING FOR MERCY

Philotas pleads with Alexander to show mercy in a 19th-century sketch by Pierre-Narcisse Guérin (above) Museum of Fine Arts, Valenciennes, France

RENÉ-GABRIEL OJÉDA/RMN-GRAND PALAIS

Parmenio could act against him to avenge the death of his son. Alexander had to move fast to rid himself of the old man, whose loyalty had been questioned in Philotas's trial. Despite a long life of trusted service to Alexander and his father before him, the old general Parmenio was now seen as a threat.

Although Parmenio had always been an influential figure, tensions had been growing. His age had made him cautious, in contrast with Alexander's impetuousness. Their differences had led to frequent disagreements over the years on tactics and strategy. Parmenio had been put in charge of much of the empire's wealth and strategic supply lines, a powerful position. Some historians have even suggested that the plot against Philotas was cooked up as an excuse to remove his father from power.

Parmenio was based in Ecbatana, a former summer residence of the Persian kings. Sources report that before his murder he knew nothing of the terrible fate that had befallen his son. While there was at least some semblance of a trial before Philotas's execution, there would be no trial for his father. Parmenio was murdered by a courier sent by Alexander. Sources report that the courier handed a series of letters to Parmenio and then quickly killed him, an act carried out for political expediency alone. Alexander, determined to reassert his personal authority once and for all, also dispatched a small contingent to Ecbatana with orders to put down any rebellion that might ensue among Parmenio's troops after his death.

Before setting out from Phrada to launch a new campaign, Alexander renamed the city Alexandria Prophthasia (Anticipation). He memorialized the city because it was there that he had anticipated Philotas's alleged plot.

Despite a long life of trusted service to Alexander and his father before him, the old general Parmenio was now seen as a threat.

1 THE TORTURE OF PHILOTAS

Alexander's aides closed ranks against Philotas, persuading the king to permit his torture

[H]e was seized, and while his eyes were being bound, while his clothing was taken off, he called upon his country's gods and on the law of nations, but vainly to deaf ears . . . now fire, and now the lash were used on him, no longer for the purpose of seeking the truth, but as a punishment . . . but when his body, swollen with wounds, could no longer endure the blows of the scourges . . . he promised that if they would moderate his tortures, he would tell them what they wished to know . . . [Later, he was] stoned to death, on a given signal, after the usage of their country

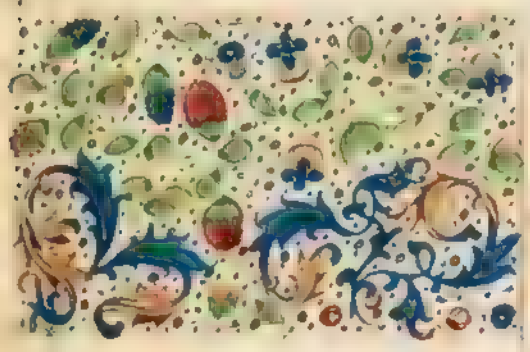
—Histories of Alexander the Great, *Quintus Curtius Rufus (translation by John C. Rolfe, 1946)*

ABOVE, THE EXECUTION OF PHILOTAS. A MINIATURE FROM THE 15TH-CENTURY *LIVRE DES CONQUÊTES ET FAITS D'ALEXANDRE* BASED ON THE FIRST-CENTURY A.D. *HISTORIES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT* BY QUINTUS CURTIUS RUFUS. JOHN PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

2 THE STABBING OF PARMENIO

Parmenio was in a powerful position, controlling the supply lines that fed Alexander's far-flung campaigns. The king decided to kill him, either fearing his reaction to his son's death, or because he had wanted to purge both father and son all along. According to one version using ancient sources including the second-century historian Arrian, Alexander sent the letter ordering Parmenio's execution via Polydamus, a friend of the old general. A small party set out for Ecbatana on racing camels and were able to cover more than 600 miles in 10 days. On arrival, Polydamus handed over the king's order to the generals under Parmenio. Together they went to look for the old man, who was in the garden of his house and was pleased to see them. They handed him a letter saying it was from his son Philotas, and as he was reading it they stabbed him to death.

ABOVE, THE DEATH OF PARMENIO IN A 15TH-CENTURY FLEMISH MANUSCRIPT. LISZT COLLECTION



PHOTOS: QUINTA/ALBUM

FATHER AND SONS

Philotas's father, Parmenio, served Alexander's father, Philip II, who is said to have called Parmenio his one trustworthy general. After Philip's death, Parmenio insured Alexander's smooth accession to the throne by executing his main rival. To reward the faithful old general, Alexander installed two of Parmenio's sons in his regime: the younger, Nicanor, commanded an infantry regiment, while the elder, Philotas, became commander of the Companion cavalry.

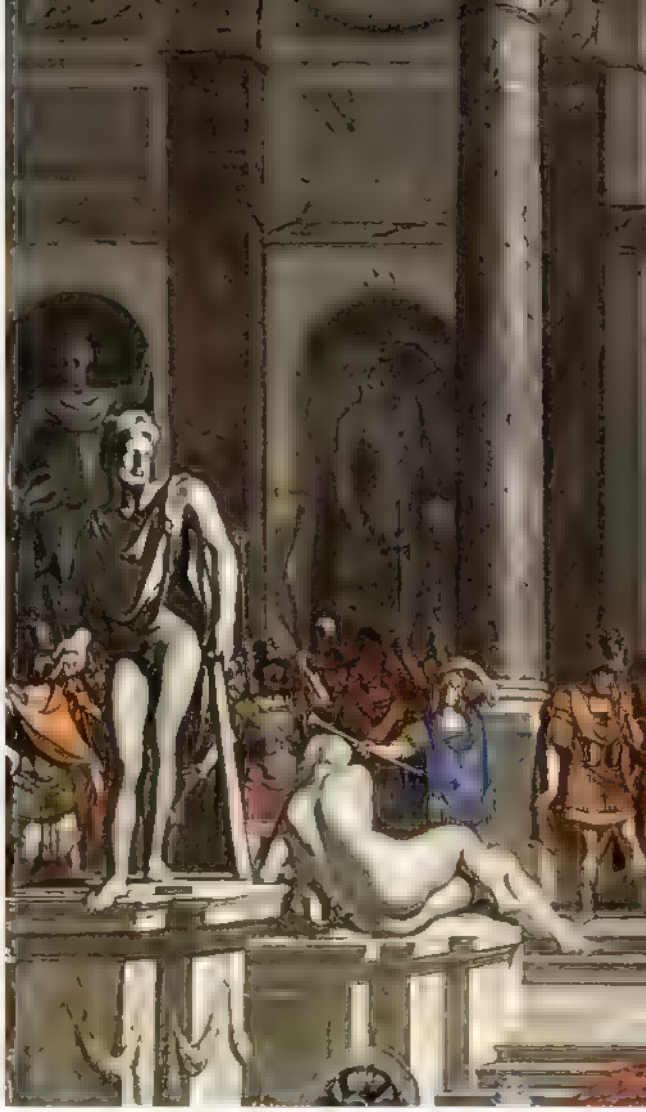
ALEXANDER, DEPICTED AS ONE OF THE DIOSCURI (THE TWINS CASTOR AND POLLUX) IN A FIRST-CENTURY B.C. SCULPTURE FROM ANCIENT CYRENE, LIBYA

AKG/ALBUM

STANDING ON CEREMONY

AMONG THE BEHAVIORS that irked members of Alexander's entourage was his adoption of the courtly ceremonies of his Persian predecessors. These involved complex rituals of greeting the king, which in the case of the lowliest subjects, required full prostration. Termed *proskynesis* in Greek (literally "kissing toward"), the practice was regarded by many Macedons as hostile to the Hellenist spirit. Worshipping a living person as if they were divine struck them as both impious and degrading. The second-century A.D. historian Arrian of Nicomedia writes of a face-off at a banquet when some figures in Alexander's inner circle spoke of their approval of the ritual. Callisthenes, the court scholar, was having none of it. "It is unreasonable to obliterate all these distinctions by inflating human beings to excessive proportions through extravagant honors, while inappropriately diminishing gods. If one must think in foreign ways on the grounds that this argument has originated in a foreign land, then do not forget Greece, Alexander. It was for her sake that you launched your whole expedition, to add Asia to Greece."

ABOVE, A PERSIAN KING (POSSIBLY DARIUS THE GREAT), RECEIVES A SENIOR COURT OFFICIAL ON A FIFTH-CENTURY B.C. RELIEF AT PERSEPOLIS.



Remorse and Retreat

The deaths of two of his most trusted advisers did not soothe Alexander, whose character continued to degrade in the coming years. He continued to adopt what the Macedons saw as Persian manners, forgoing a warrior's restraint in favor of decadence. For example, a Greek banquet represented the apogee of civilized society—a time for celebration, and discussion of philosophy and reason. Alexander's banquets, however, had become characterized by debauchery, colored by passion and carnality.

The most notorious banquet took place in Maracanda (Samarqand) in 328 B.C. Alexander, then about age 28 and determined to reach India, was leading his reluctant army into harsh terrain in the east. That night, the great commander was drunk. A furious dispute arose between him and Cleitus the Black over Alexander's increasingly Persian style and policies. Incensed by Cleitus's accusations, Alexander murdered him in a rage with a javelin. Afterward, he was said to have felt

BANQUET OF DEATH

Daniel de Blieck's 1663 painting, "Alexander Slaying Cleitus" sets the murder in palatial surroundings. Fascination with Alexander's exploits inspired writers and artists for centuries. Ferens Art Gallery, Hull, England

BRIDGEMAN/AC

great remorse: First-century A.D. Roman biographer Plutarch described in his *Parallel Lives* how "he spent the night and the following day in bitter lamentations, and at last lay speechless, worn out with his cries."

Alexander's actions did little to quell opposition among his followers, and other plots arose. In 327 B.C. several of Alexander's pages were suspected of planning to murder him. One of Alexander's associates, the biographer and historian Callisthenes, became entangled in the plot.

Plutarch said that Callisthenes "showed great ability as a speaker, but lacked common sense." Callisthenes had loudly glorified Alexander's exploits, disseminating the account of his incarnation as the son of Zeus in Egypt. His writing earned him favor, but it was no match for Alexander's ego. Alexander had adopted the Persian custom of *proskynesis*—prostration before the king—but Callisthenes, as a Greek, would not practice it. Alexander allowed this, but historians believe that the defiance was noted.

News of the plot surfaced, and one account seemed to seal the fate of Callisthenes. Plutarch described how one of the pages asked Callisthenes how to become "a most illustrious man." His damning answer: "By killing the most illustrious." None of the pages named Callisthenes as a conspirator, but the damage was done. The pages were executed. For his "crimes," Callisthenes was imprisoned and is believed to have died in prison.

In 326 B.C., having reached the edge of India at the Hyphasis (Beas) River, Alexander's men had had enough. They mutinied, he was forced to retreat west, and his reign would never recover. Three years later, Alexander died of fever in Babylon at age 32. On that day a Babylonian astronomer dispassionately noted in his journal: "The king died; clouds made it impossible to observe the skies." His empire would be carved up between his generals, never to rise again.

JUAN PABLO SÁNCHEZ IS A SPECIALIST IN CLASSICAL HISTORY AND LITERATURE AND A TRANSLATOR OF PLUTARCH'S *PARALLEL LIVES*.

The Devil in the Medieval Mind

HORNS, HOOVES, AND HELL

In the Middle Ages European artists and theologians shaped a new terrifying vision of Satan, taking him from a fallen angel to the overlord of hell and archenemy of the divine.

MARINA MONTESANO

HELLISH APPETITES

Seated on a fiery throne, Satan devours a damned soul in this detail from 13th-century mosaics adorning the Baptistry of Florence, Italy. Left: The devil tormenting Job in a scene from a 12th-century capital. Musée des Augustins, Toulouse, France.

BLUE DEVILS?

THE OLDEST REPRESENTATION OF the Christian idea of the devil may be this mosaic in the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy. The sixth-century mosaic shows Jesus Christ, dressed in royal purple, seated at the Last Judgment. He is separating the [illegible] sheep.

Behind the sheep stands a red angel, and behind the damned is a blue angel. Both [illegible] the fallen angel later known as Satan. Unlike later depictions, he is beautiful and radiant—not the horned, hoofed, red monster of later depictions. The color of the holy kingdom in the sixth century, red became associated with hellfire and the devil in later centuries.

[illegible]

REBEL ROUSER

Inspired by Milton's poem *Paradise Lost*, William Blake's 1808 engraving (below) depicts Satan inciting the rebel angels against God. V&A Museum, London

HERITAGE/AGE FOTOSTOCK

Perhaps the devil's most famous depiction was crafted by English poet John Milton in his 1667 masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*. The epic poem tells two stories: one of the fall of man and the other the fall of an angel. Once the most beautiful of all angels, Lucifer rebels against God and becomes Satan, the adversary, who is:

Hurld headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
With hideous ruine and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire . . .

To develop his character, Milton relied on an idea of the devil that had been evolving throughout the Middle Ages and early Renaissance: the foe of God and man, the master of witches, and the tempter of sinners. This personage was largely fixed in the collective consciousness of Christendom, but the devil's origins are complex, coming from many places, not just the Bible.

The Christian Bible devotes only a few passages to the devil and does not describe his appearance. In Genesis the serpent who tempts Eve is strongly associated with Satan, but many theologians think the composition of Genesis predates the concept of the devil. Passages alluding to Lucifer's fall can be found in the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel. The Old Testament's Satan is not the opponent of God, but rather an adversary as exemplified by his role in the Book of Job.

In the New Testament Satan has become a force of evil. He tempts Jesus to abandon his mission: "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:9). He is described as a hunter of souls: The First Epistle of Peter warns: "Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour" (I Peter 5:8). By the Book of Revelation, Satan has become an apocalyptic beast, determined to overthrow god and heaven.

The two devils of the Old and New Testaments are first connected in the Vulgate, a fourth-century A.D. translation of the Hebrew Bible into

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN" Christ rejects the devil's offer to give him power over all the world if he will only worship him. From the 14th-century altarpiece entitled "Maestà" (Majesty) by Duccio di Buoninsegna. Frick Collection, New York

DEA/ALBUM

Latin. Isaiah 14 refers to an earthly king as Lucifer, meaning "bearer of light," who falls from heaven. Echoing Isaiah's image, Jesus says in Luke 10:18: "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning." At the dawn of the Middle Ages in the fifth century, authors began to apply the Vulgate term for Isaiah's Lucifer to the rebellious angel leader in the Book of Revelation, cast into the pit along with his evil minions.

Old Gods and the New

During the Middle Ages the devil's appearance changed drastically. A sixth-century mosaic from Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy, shows the Last Judgment, and the satanic figure appears as an ethereal blue angel. This angelic imagery will ultimately be shed in favor of a more demonic appearance.

Many of the devil's animalistic traits can be traced back to influences from earlier religions. One of the first was found in ancient Babylonian texts—wicked demons named Lilitu. These winged female demons flew through the night, seducing men and attacking pregnant women and infants. In the Jewish tradition, this demoness evolved into Lilith, Adam's first wife. Lilith came to embody lust, rebellion, and ungodliness, traits later linked to the Christian devil. Another ancient deity who became associated with Satan was Beelzebub, which translates roughly to "Lord of the Flies." Beelzebub was a Canaanite deity, named in the Old Testament as a false idol that the Hebrews must shun.

Classical influences also played a role in the development of the Christian devil. As Christianity took root in the Roman world, early worshipers rejected pagan gods and believed them to be evil spirits. Pan, half goat and half man, was a lusty god of nature whose carnal appetites made him easy to associate with the forbidden. His goat horns and cloven hooves became synonymous with sin and would later be adopted by artists in their horrific images of the devil.

THE FALL OF THE REBEL ANGELS BY AN ANONYMOUS MASTER OF THE SIENESE SCHOOL, 14TH CENTURY. LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

LOOKING AHEAD

ST. AUGUSTINE (A.D. 354–430), today considered one of the most significant Christian authors since St. Paul, took demons very seriously. He wrote a short work dedicated to demons as well as including many passages about them in his greatest work, his treatise on demons (*De divinatione daemonum*). Augustine argued that demons would [illegible] to gain [illegible] to have gained [illegible] to receive [illegible] them divine honors.

THE PAGAN WRITER APULEIUS WATCHES DEMONS IN A 15TH-CENTURY ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S *CITY OF GOD*. CONDÉ MUSEUM, CHANTILLY, FRANCE

Reproduced in pictures, from the great artists down to the humble village artisan, a reptilian, winged figure of damnation became the iconic devil figure. Artists like Giotto and Fra Angelico often depicted the devil in paintings of the Last Judgment. In them, a ravenous Satan is seated in the center of hell as he gleefully chomps on the souls of sinners.

The devil's image was further reflected in one of the world's most influential literary works: Dante's *Inferno*, published in the early 14th century as part of the *Divine Comedy*. Dante describes the deepest regions of hell where Satan holds sway. The devil has three faces and "At every mouth he with his teeth was crunching / A sinner . . . / So that he three of them tormented thus." Satan bears "mighty wings . . . / No feathers had they, but as of a bat."

Active Evil

Theologically, the idea of the devil changed during this period as well. His role in the early Middle Ages was much like his role in the Old Testament: He was an adversary but not an active

SPIRIT SUMMONING

SOME INSIGHTS into the rituals of the medieval necromancer can be gleaned through the manuals that they used. The best known are those that passed on the supposed magic powers of the biblical king Solomon. *The Key of Solomon (Clavicula Salomonis)* is generally agreed to be a 14th-century work that contains invocations to demons imploring them for power. The text includes blasphemous supplications to God asking that the demons obey. In the section entitled "The Prayer," the necromancer is instructed to intone:

> *"Here ye, and be ye ready, in whatever part of the Universe ye may be, to obey the voice of God, the Mighty One, and the names of the Creator. We let you know by this signal and sound that ye will be convoked hither . . . to obey our commands." This being done, let the Master complete his work, renew the Circle, and make the incensements and fumigations.*

DEPICTION OF THE MAGIC CIRCLE IN A 15TH-CENTURY ILLUMINATED LETTER M FROM A MANUSCRIPT BY PLINY THE ELDER. BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE MARCIANA, VENICE.

IMAGLI ORTE/AURIMAGES

enemy. Throughout the Middle Ages Satan evolved into an aggressive, malignant force set on tormenting as many human souls as possible.

The Greek daimon—a spirit or minor divinity who engaged with humans—informed a key aspect of this new devil. From the third century A.D., a mystical philosophy known as Neoplatonism incorporated theurgy, invoking daimons to request favors. Neoplatonism was not wholly incompatible with Christianity, but communicating with spirits was. Rituals could not sway the Christian God into granting human wishes; prayers were only evidence of piety. If daimons were indeed doing a person's bidding, they had to be in league with Satan, who "helped" mortals to deceive them and cause their downfall.

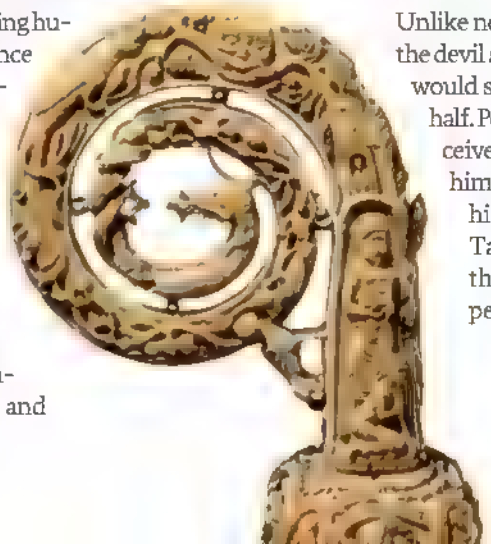
As more ancient works were translated into Latin throughout the Middle Ages, a new movement, Scholasticism, tried to reconcile the teachings of the early church with pagan writings on science, philosophy, and even necromancy, the art of conjuring spirits and demons. Necromancers were courting damnation through exposure to demons. In 1326 Pope John XXII issued a bull, *Super illius specula*, which stated that anyone found guilty of engaging in necromancy could be condemned for heresy and burnt at the stake.

During the 14th century Europe faced a dark period blighted by the Black Death, famine, and war. Fear of the devil and his influence increased, as evidenced by an explosion of witch hunts. Unlike necromancers, the church believed that the devil sought out women as partners; witches would sign pacts and engage in evil on his behalf. People were no longer seen as merely deceived by Satan, but in active collusion with him against God. By this time in European history, the devil no longer sat passively. Taking an active role, Satan is present in the world, stealing souls and recruiting people to do his bidding.

DEVIL IN THE DETAIL

The devil appears in the form of a dragon on this Renaissance period, French ivory carved bishop's crozier. National Museum of Bargello, Florence

SCALA, FLORENCE



MARINA MONTESANO IS PROFESSOR OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MESSINA, ITALY

EVIL'S TRUE COLORS

Early Christian authors such as St. Augustine regarded the devil as a fallen angel; he was bad for having rebelled against God, but retained his angelic substance, and was not a physical being. When taking a physical form, the devil might choose as undiabolical an aspect as possible—a beautiful woman, for example, or a holy figure—the better to deceive his victim. Many medieval artists, however, in order to drive home their message, presented the devil in as terrifying a form as possible. His appearance was otherworldly but twisted by sin into hideousness. His body was beastlike, depicted with a tail, long ears, talons, and hooves. Much of this imagery is believed to be adapted from classical images of Pan or lusty satyrs. The devil often had wings. In the early Middle Ages they were feathered, like an angel, but from the 12th century on they tended to be leathery, like a bat.

SAINT AND SATAN
Above, "The Devil Presenting St. Augustine With the Book of Vices," a late 15th-century painted panel by Michael Pacher. Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany

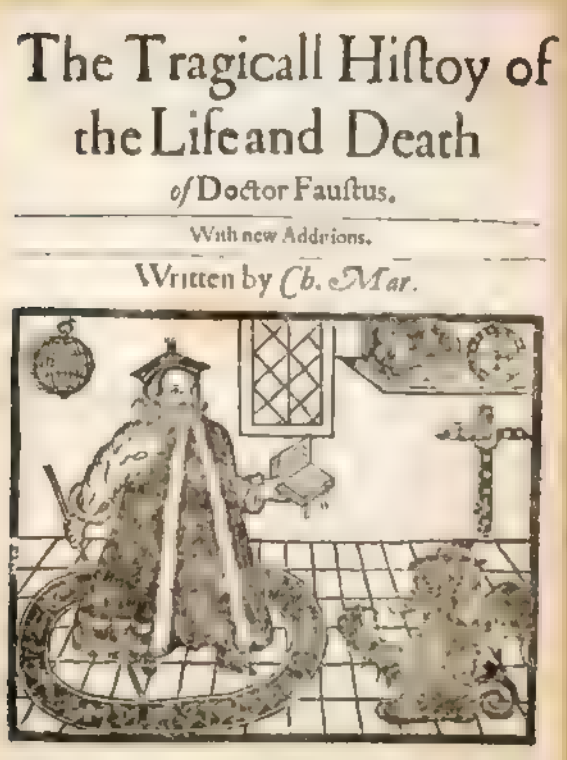
BPK/BMN-GRAND PALAIS

HANGING FOR ETERNITY
Carved Romanesque capital, on which two demons tug at the noose from which Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus, is hanging. Cathedral of St. Lazarus, Autun, France

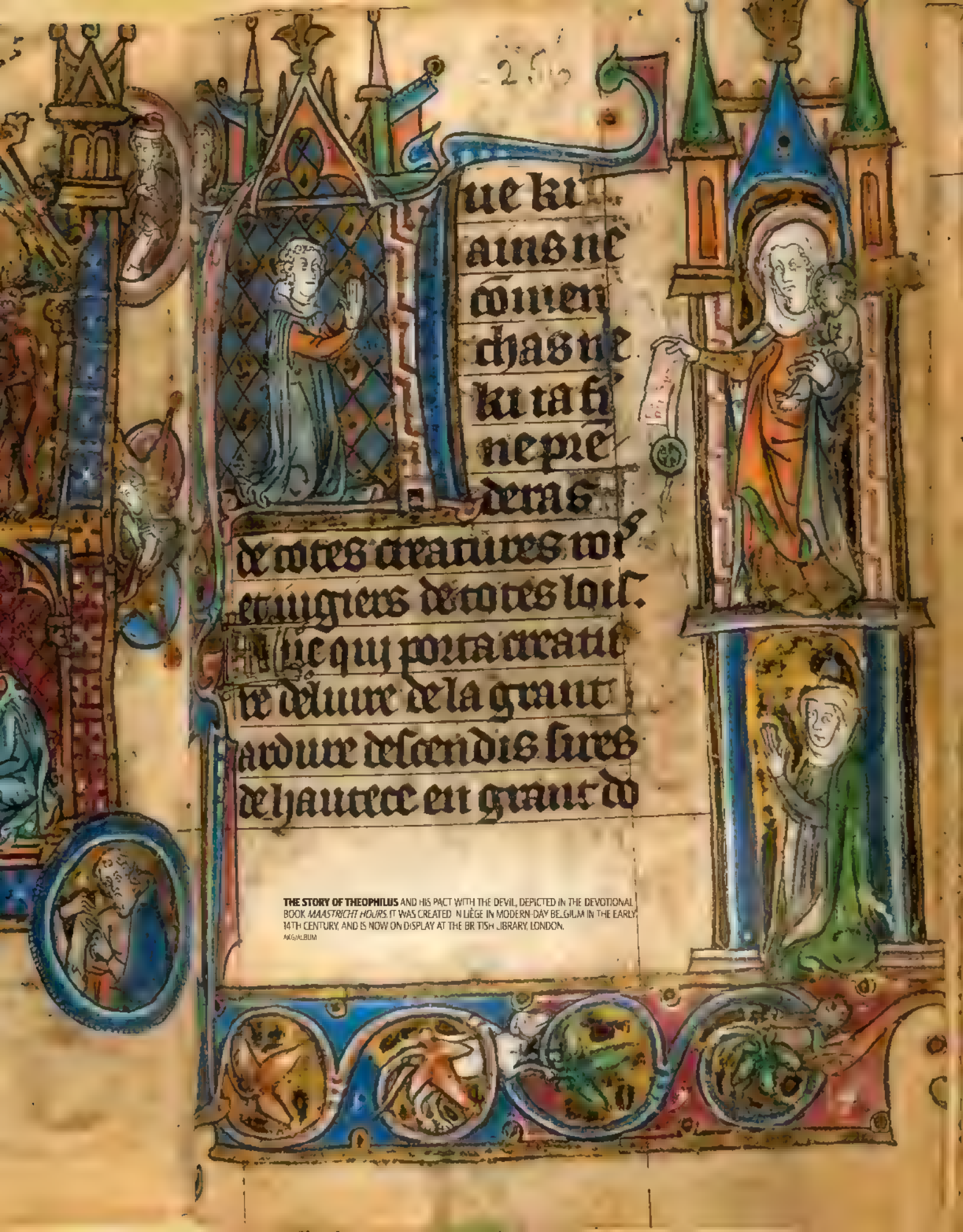
SCALA, FLORENCE

DEVIL'S BARGAINS

The idea of selling one's soul to the devil has long piqued the European imagination. In the 10th century Hrosvitha of Gandersheim wrote the story of the deacon Theophilus and his pact with the devil. In the tale, set in the sixth century A.D., Theophilus falls into disgrace with his archbishop. With the help of a Jewish magician, the disgraced deacon signs a contract in his own blood agreeing to exchange his soul for power. But Theophilus soon repents, calls upon the Virgin Mary, and manages to get the pact with the devil dissolved. The 13th-century drama *Le Miracle de Théophile* by French poet Rutebeuf extended the popularity of the story. Accreting around the figure of a real-life alchemist named Faust who lived in northern Germany in the early 1500s, the tale mutated to become the one most familiar today. In the 1592 stage version by English playwright Christopher Marlowe, Faust signs a deal with the devil in his own blood to be able to use diabolical magic for 24 years. At the end of that time, his powers desert him, and he is dragged away to hell.


The Tragicall Hiſtoy of
the Life and Death
of Doctor Fauſtus.
With new Addrions.
Written by Ch. Mar.

TITLE PAGE OF A 1620 EDITION OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S 1592 PLAY BASED ON THE LEGEND OF FAUST
AKG/ALBUM



THE STORY OF THEOPHILUS AND HIS PACT WITH THE DEVIL, DEPICTED IN THE DEVOTIONAL BOOK *MAASTRICHT HOURS*. IT WAS CREATED IN LIÈGE IN MODERN-DAY BELGIUM IN THE EARLY 14TH CENTURY, AND IS NOW ON DISPLAY AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON.
AKG/ALBUM

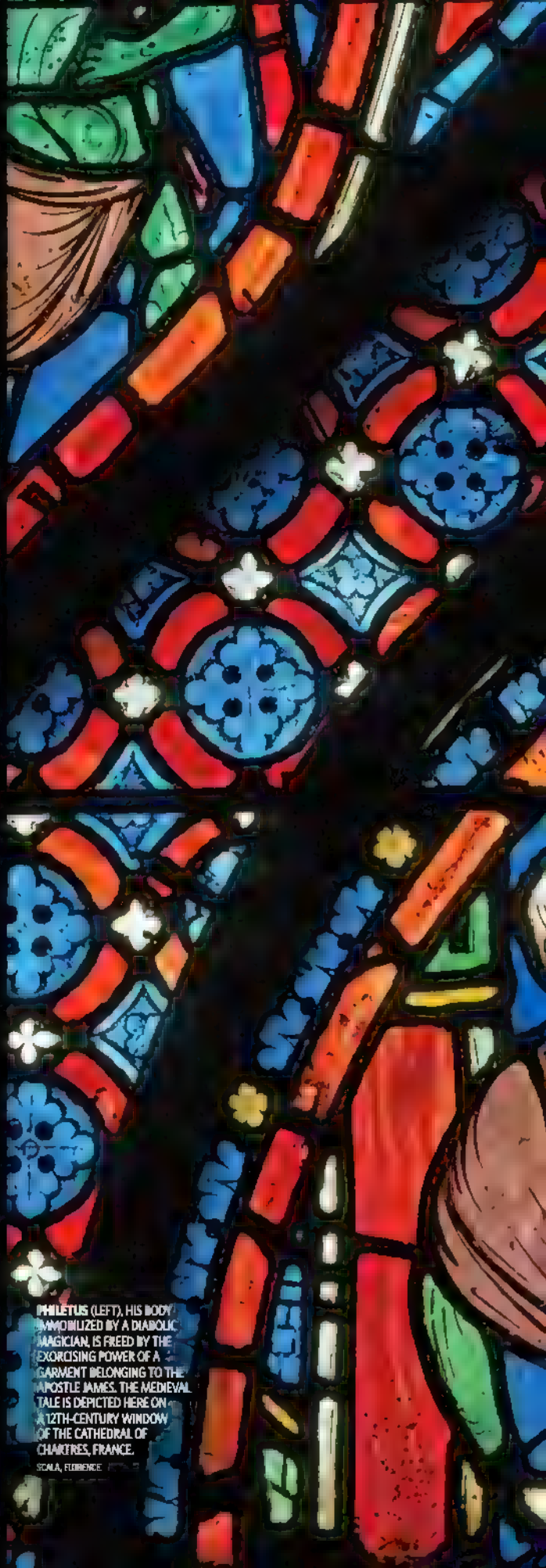
3

EXORCISTS AND INTERVIEWS

By the mid-15th century the devil struck so much fear into the hearts of priests that some clerics felt moved to write exorcism manuals. One example, published around 1450, is known as the *Livre d'Egidius*. It counsels exorcists to prepare for battle with demonic forces by learning about their enemy. If a spirit has taken possession of someone, the exorcist must ascertain whether they come from hell (the domain of the damned) or purgatory (the transitional space where good, but flawed, souls must do penance before later passing into heaven). Before addressing the demon, the exorcist is warned to pray fervently "with a contrite heart." Then the exorcist should ask the demon's names and begin the interrogation. To a spirit from purgatory, they might ask how long they have been there, why they have come, and the reasons for selecting this person. They should also ask that if they are a good spirit, still hoping for God's mercy, then why are they now behaving in such a malevolent way? Spirits suspected of coming from hell were asked different questions. These included details on their crimes and punishments, and which was worse, the torments of hell or the privation of God's grace?

ST. THEOBALD EXORCISES A POSSESSED MAN. 14TH-CENTURY ALTARPIECE OF THE CHURCH OF ST. THIBAULT, BURGUNDY, FRANCE.

DEA/ALBERI



PHILETUS (LEFT), HIS BODY IMMOBILIZED BY A DIABOLIC MAGICIAN, IS FREED BY THE EXORCISING POWER OF A GARMENT BELONGING TO THE APOSTLE JAMES. THE MEDIEVAL TALE IS DEPICTED HERE ON A 12TH-CENTURY WINDOW OF THE CATHEDRAL OF CHARTRES, FRANCE.

SCALA, FLORENCE

4

THE LAST JUDGMENT

The medieval representation of hell grows out of the core Christian belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth, and humanity will be judged. Many paintings of the era depict judgment day when the saintly are rewarded with heaven, and the sinners are punished with hell. Early Renaissance painter Fra Angelico offers a vivid insight into these visions in his circa 1431 painting "The Last Judgment" (right). Armed with spears and spikes, demons shepherd all the damned—bishops and peasants, men and women—into hell for eternity. Most artists depict in great detail the punishments awaiting them: Stripped naked, their souls are tormented, whether bound by serpents, burned by fire, swallowing molten gold, or tearing each other apart. Common to many of these types of paintings is the central, monstrous figure of Satan who savagely devours the condemned. Fra Angelico's work is no exception: His Satan appears at the base of the painting, chewing on the damned while sitting in a cauldron filled with body parts and stirred by demons.

THE DAMNED ENTER THE INFERNO. ALTARPIECE BY NICHOLAS OF VERDUN, LATE 12TH CENTURY, CATHEDRAL OF TOURNAI, BELGIUM

THE SAVED AND THE DAMNED DETAIL FROM "THE LAST JUDGMENT" BY FRA ANGELICO. TEMPERA ON BOARD, CIRCA 1431. MUSEUM OF SAN MARCO, FLORENCE

ERICH LESSING/ALBUM

THE MAYA REVEALED

In the 1840s two archaeologists introduced the grandeur of the Maya to the world. Through compelling words and captivating pictures, John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood exposed the complexity and beauty of the ancients.

ISABEL BUENO

HIGH CULTURE
Local lore says the 90-foot-high Pyramid of the Magician was built in one night by a dwarfish sorcerer. The structure soars over the Maya city of Uxmal, Yucatán, which Stephens and Catherwood visited on both of their journeys.
DMITRI ALEXANDER/GETTY IMAGES

Despite ruling an empire that included swathes of Central America, King Philip II of Spain never crossed the Atlantic. His insights into his New World realms came to him in the form of detailed reports, such as one penned in 1576 by Diego García de Palacio, a senior official in Yucatán:

> The first place in the province of Honduras [is] called Copán; there are ruins there, with vestiges of what had once been a great population, and of magnificent buildings [including] mounds that seem to have been made by hand, and in them many things to note. Before reaching them, there is a large figure of an eagle in stone . . . containing certain letters of a language unknown.

In 1839 two archaeologists, John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood, carefully pored over these words to Philip to help them in their journey to Copán. Although it, and other sites, were not exactly "lost," a fog of ignorance still obscured European and American notions of Mesoamerican culture. Some early 19th-century authors—guided by racist assumptions about the indigenous inhabitants of the area—even argued the monumental ruined cities of Central America must have been built by Egyptians. Aided by the scant documentation on the site, including García de Palacio's letter, Stephens and Catherwood set out to change these opinions and reawaken interest in these ceremonial centers, now swallowed by the jungle.

Equipped with basic surveying gear and machetes, they embarked on two adventure-filled tours of Central America between 1839 and 1842 that provided the first in-depth surveys of the sites. Lavishly illustrated by Catherwood, their books revealed to the world the scope and complexity of the Maya's ceremonial centers, which flourished in that culture's classical age, between the third and 10th centuries A.D.

1836

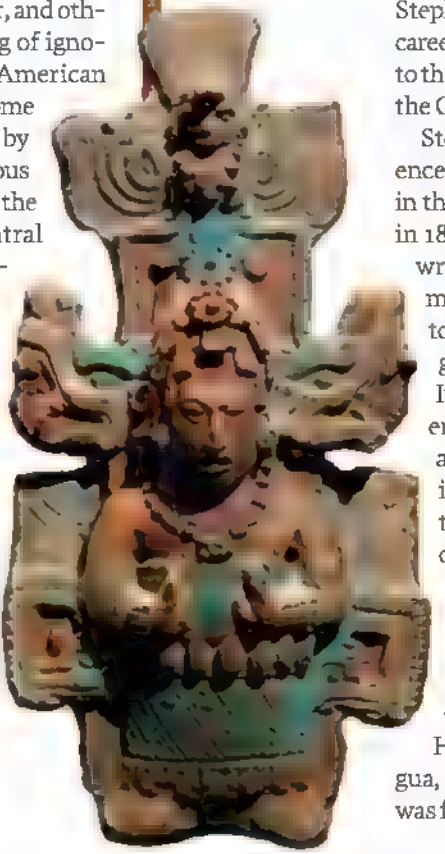
Author, traveler, and archaeologist Stephens gets to know artist and scholar Catherwood in London

1839-1840

The pair carry out their first journey to survey Maya ruins. Stephens writes *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán* (published 1841)

1841-42

The r second journey. Stephens writes *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán* (published 1843)



TERRA-COTTA FIGURINE OF A CELESTIAL DIVINITY, FOUND AT THE MAYA NECROPOLIS AT JAINA ISLAND, YUCATÁN. MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY, MEXICO
DAGLI ORTI/AURIMAGES

Perfect Partnership

John Lloyd Stephens grew up in New York. After studying law, he entered the ranks of the Democratic Party, and looked set on a career in politics. But his life took a radical turn when his doctor recommended that a trip to Europe might help him recover from a respiratory condition. Not content with the usual sightseeing in Italy and Greece, he ventured into Turkey.

In November 1835, unable to secure a return passage to the United States, Stephens took advantage of the delay in returning to explore the Middle East. Adopting the pseudonym Abdel Hassis, and paying the sheik of the region, he was granted access to visit the Nabataean city of Petra. Befriending those in power would set Stephens in good stead for much of his traveling career: In Egypt he took in the key sites thanks to the safe passage afforded him by Mehmet Ali, the Ottoman governor of Egypt.

Stephens also knew how to turn his experiences into good copy, relating his wanderings in the Middle East and Europe in two volumes in 1837 and 1838. At around the time he was writing these works—which proved to be a major commercial success—Stephens got to know Frederick Catherwood in London. A gifted linguist, who spoke and read Arabic, Italian, Greek, and Hebrew perfectly, Catherwood was also a talented architect, artist, and draftsman, and had already taken part in several archaeological expeditions. The two men formed an instant bond, and went on to become inseparable intellectual and traveling companions.

On his return home, Stephens was appointed by President Martin Van Buren as ambassador to the Federal Republic of Central America. Comprising modern-day Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, this short-lived republic was fragmenting due to a civil war. In an era that

took a more relaxed attitude to official duties than today, Stephens had no intention of totally giving himself over to his diplomatic duties. Fascinated for many years by Mesoamerican culture, he planned to use his position to investigate the archaeological remains in the region.

This was not entirely virgin territory. The great German anthropologist Alexander von Humboldt had written on ruined Central American cities following his expeditions in the early 1800s. The soldier and explorer Juan Galindo had examined and drawn Palenque and Copán in the 1830s. As a result of this study, Galindo had drawn tentative conclusions as to their both forming part of a shared culture.

Stephens avidly read these, and as many other sources on the sites, as he could. Flush with funds from his books on the Middle East, and realizing that Catherwood's visual skills would add luster to his chronicles, Stephens brought his British friend on board as illustrator. In October 1839 the pair left New York by ship for Belize.

Jewels of the Rain Forest

To arrive at their first site, Copán in modern-day Honduras, they had to slog through large mud patches and endure high humidity, searing heat, and biting insects as they hacked their way through the dense vegetation with machetes. When they at last reached Copán and glimpsed its magnificent pyramids, so different from those they had seen in Egypt, they were ecstatic. They found intricate stelae and engravings that convinced them the city had been home to an advanced indigenous civilization.

At first the owner of the land wanted them to leave. But Stephens donned his ambassador's coat "with a profusion of large eagle buttons," and used his credentials to convince the owner to give them permission to draw and study the ruins for $50. The two men got to work, Stephens directing the excavation. Catherwood, equipped with his theodolite—an instrument for measuring angles—drew up a plan of the city. He made extraordinarily detailed drawings, aided by a camera lucida, an early 19th-century invention that projects highly detailed images of objects onto a flat surface, which can then be traced.

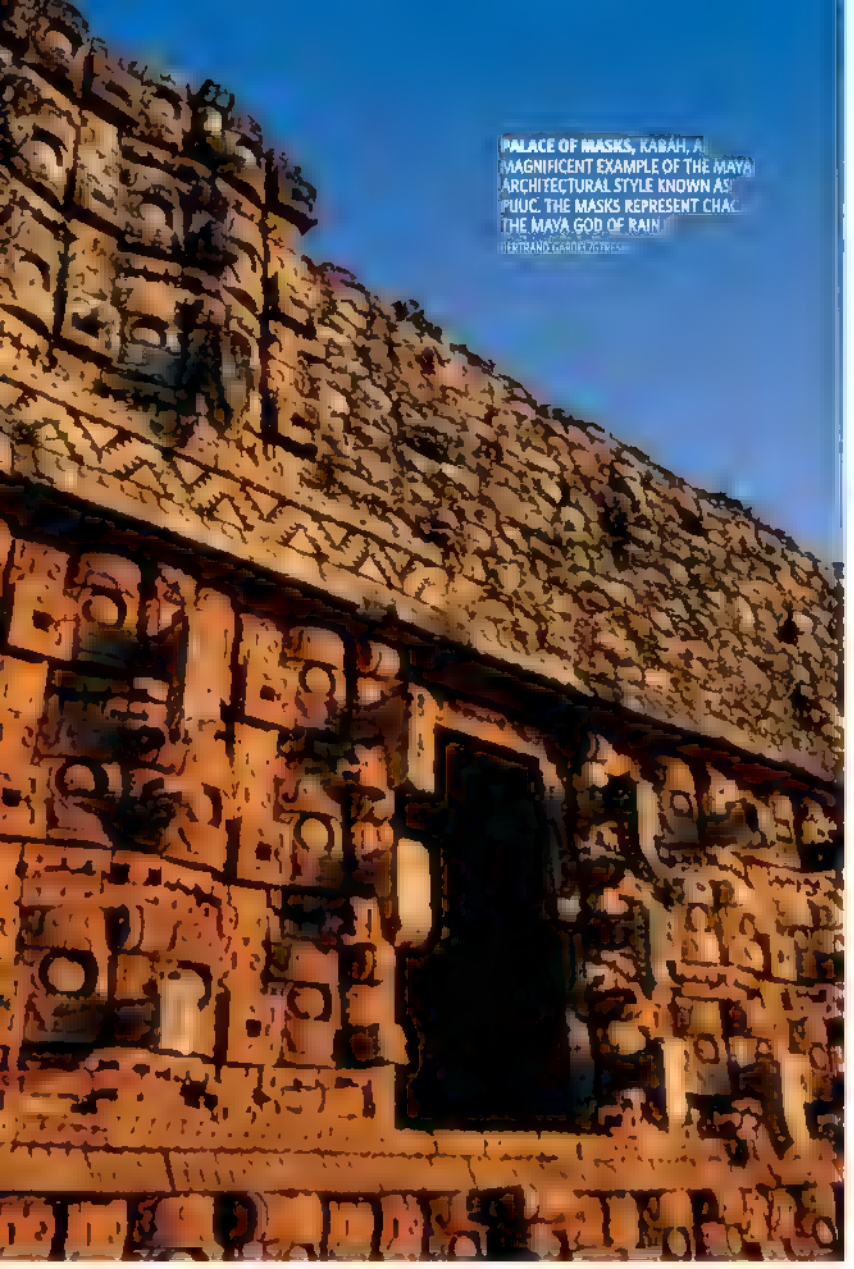
A LITHOGRAPH BY FREDERICK CATHERWOOD OF AN IDOL AND ALTAR AT THE MAYA SITE OF COPÁN, DESCRIBED BELOW BY HIS COLLEAGUE, JOHN LLOYD STEPHENS

WORKS OF ART

JOHN LLOYD STEPHENS
19TH-CENTURY WOOD ENGRAVING
GRANGER/ALBUM

"THE FRONT was the figure of a man, curiously and richly dressed, and the face, evidently a portrait, solemn, stern, and well fitted to excite terror . . . This our guide called an 'Idol'; and before it . . . was a large block of stone, also sculpted with figures and emblematical devices, which he called an altar. The sight of this unexpected monument put at rest . . . all uncertainty in regard to the character of American antiquities, and gave us the assurance that the objects we were in search of were interesting, not only as the remains of an unknown people, but as works of art, proving . . . that the people who once occupied the Continent of America were not savages."

From *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán*, by John Lloyd Stephens, 1841



PALACE OF MASKS, KABAH, A MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLE OF THE MAYA ARCHITECTURAL STYLE KNOWN AS PUUC. THE MASKS REPRESENT CHAC, THE MAYA GOD OF RAIN

BERTRAND GARDEL/GTRES

COVER OF FREDERICK CATHERWOOD'S 1844 BOOK CONTAINING 25 COLOR LITHOGRAPHS OF THE KEY MAYA SITES HE VISITED WITH STEPHENS BETWEEN 1839 AND 1842

AKG/ALBUM

Having visited Quiriguá, another Maya site nearby, and seen its important collection of stelae, the explorers set off for Palenque. On the way, they noted the stunning beauty of the landscape of Guatemala, and finally reached the border of the Mexican state of Chiapas.

There, they discovered that General Santa Anna, president of Mexico, had ordered that nobody visit the city. Ignoring the prohibition, the pair continued their arduous journey and finally reached their goal. Soaked after crossing the water course that divided the settlement, and eaten alive by mosquitoes, they first saw the ruins poking out above the canopy of trees. Despite the prohibition to enter, they set up camp, installing themselves inside one of the buildings known as the Palace. One of their first tasks was to strip the vegetation from the site's structures.

The great stone bas-reliefs of Palenque's main courtyard were immortalized in Catherwood's meticulous drawings. He also made engravings of the Temple of the Foliated Cross, the Temple of the Sun, and the Temple of the Inscriptions. It was in the latter a century later that the tomb of Pacal the Great, Lord of Palenque, would be located, whose reign coincided with the city's seventh-century golden age. Stephens documented common features between this and the other Maya sites he had seen, and argued that many of the reliefs they had found bore what he believed to be complex hieroglyphics forming part of a narrative. Stephens's hieroglyphs theory was based only on intuition at that stage, as breakthroughs in deciphering Maya writing did not come until the late 20th century.

Not all of Stephens's methods would be considered so praiseworthy by today's standards. He tried, for instance, to buy Palenque outright. Mexican law, however, did not permit a foreigner to own land unless he was married to a Mexican—a step Stephens was not prepared to take. His grandiose ambition had been to transfer the monuments of Palenque, and other sites, stone by stone, and re-create them in New York in a museum dedicated to Maya culture. He no doubt considered his aims honorable, but such an act would today be unthinkable.

After almost two months of work, the two men struck camp, setting off for the Gulf of Mexico, determined to explore the ancient city of Uxmal, whose magnificent Pyramid of the Magician is regarded as one of the jewels of the Puuc style of Classic Maya architecture. By the time they arrived there, on June 24, 1840, Catherwood was gravely ill with malaria, and soon after, they returned to New York so that he could recover.

Adventurers and Authors

Despite its hardships and its conclusion in illness, this first trip was deemed a great success. In New York Stephens put all his notes in order and published a new book, entitled *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán,* which would also prove to be another publishing hit. In it, detailed archaeological accounts rub

A CASTLE ON THE COAST THE PYRAMID, OR CASTILLO, OF THE MAYA CITY OF TULUM LOOMS OVER THE RUGGED YUCATÁN COAST. STEPHENS AND CATHERWOOD VISITED THE RUINS DURING THEIR SECOND JOURNEY IN 1841–42.

KAY MAERTZ/AGE FOTOSTOCK

shoulders with descriptions of a country torn apart by war and instability, with tales of bandits roaming the country. Amid the turmoil and discomfort, Stephens found time to sketch the people he met, and revels in quirky, colorful details, such as detailing the clutter of a priest's room, encumbered with: "a cruet of mustard and another of oil . . . cups, plates, a sauce-boat, a large lump of sugar, skulls, bones, books, cheese, and manuscripts."

Once Catherwood had recovered, the pair planned for another journey to Yucatán. Despite his air of a flamboyant adventurer, Stephens was a meticulous organizer, and prepared for the second trip in minute detail. Leaving in October 1841, they were accompanied by the naturalist Samuel Cabot, who wanted to study the local fauna. Among other sites, the team explored the cities of Kabáh, Chichén Itzá, and Labná, and revisited sites from their earlier visit, including Uxmal. A second book, entitled *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán,* containing 120 engravings by Catherwood, was published in two volumes in New York in 1843. A year later, Catherwood published a standalone work containing a selection of his color lithographs of the sites.

The two men never traveled together again. Stephens joined the board of the Ocean Steam Navigation Company, and in 1850 he was offered a chance to participate in the construction of the Panama railway. Although he died in 1852 in New York, a romantic legend emerged that he had met his end in Panama in the shade of a ceiba tree, sacred to the Maya. In 1947 Maya hieroglyphs were added to his gravestone, recognizing his contribution to the study of Maya civilization.

Frederick Catherwood died under tragic circumstances in September 1854, when the paddle steamer on which he was traveling was wrecked, and he perished alongside some 350 others. The death of the man whose artwork had immortalized the rediscovered Maya cities passed almost unnoticed by public opinion of the time.

ISABEL BUENO IS AN HONORARY MEMBER OF THE VICENTE LOMBARDO TOLEDANO CENTER IN MEXICO, ON WHOSE CULTURE AND HISTORY SHE HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY

OBVERSE OF A MONUMENTAL STELA AT COPÁN. FREDERICK CATHERWOOD, NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO

WITHIN A HIDDEN WORLD

Frederick Catherwood's engravings added visual richness and detail to the two books that Stephens published on their expeditions. In 1844 Catherwood selected 25 color lithographs for publication in his own book, *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán*, some of which are reproduced here.

A LOST LANGUAGE

Slashing their way through the jungle with machetes, Stephens and Catherwood arrived in Copán in 1839. Located in modern-day Honduras, the settlement thrived in the Classic period of Maya civilization—A.D. 250 to 900—and may have had a population of around 20,000 at its peak in the eighth century. On arrival, the two men found the ruins blanketed in lush vegetation. The pair's attention was soon attracted to a profusion of fallen "idols," stelae adorned with exquisite carvings. Stephens realized some of the signs were hieroglyphs, a system that would remain undecipherable until the 20th century. "We considered that the people who reared [the stelae] had published a record of themselves, through which we might, one day, hold conference with a perished race, and unveil the mystery that hung over the city."

A FRAGMENT OF SCULPTURE FROM COPAN. F. CATHERWOOD, NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO (RG)/ALBUM

PANORAMA OF PALENQUE
F. CATHERWOOD, NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO

NIGHTS IN A PALACE

Palenque

During their 1840 survey of Palenque, which flourished between A.D. 600 and 900, Catherwood produced this general view of the site, located in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. Inspired by methods he had seen used on ancient structures in Greece, Catherwood attempted to make plaster molds of carvings and architectural features at the site. This practice, however, offended local people, who feared—with good reason—that they would not be the beneficiaries of any commercial gain from the exhibition and sale of their heritage. The few molds Catherwood made were taken away from him. He and Stephens set up base in the Palace (lower left), where they slung up their hammocks and prepared to sleep in "a building raised before Europeans knew of the existence of this continent." Stephens saw key elements of Palenque's style in the Palace: "[built] of stone with a mortar of lime and sand, and the whole front covered with stucco and painted."

SPLENDOR AND SCORPIONS

Uxmal

Stephens saw Uxmal for the first time in 1840 and would revisit the site during his and Catherwood's second journey in 1841 to 1842. He considered its ruins "living memorials, more worthy than ever of investigation and study, and as I then thought . . . perhaps the only existing vestiges that could transmit to posterity the image of an American city." Dominating the local area in the late ninth century, Uxmal is now regarded as the most perfect example of Maya Puuc style, named for the Puuc region in this part of Yucatán, and characterized by lavish stone mosaics. Stephens noted in his account that when he and Catherwood set up camp amid the ruins, the workers disapproved. "The Indians looked upon our entering these places as senseless and foolhardy, and, besides imaginary dangers, they talked of snakes, scorpions, and hornets, the last of which, from the experience we had had of them in different parts of the ruins, were really objects of fear; for a swarm of them coming upon a man in such a place, would almost murder him before he could be hauled out."

THE NUNNERY QUADRANGLE, UXMAL. F. CATHERWOOD; NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO

RESCUED FROM OBSCURITY

Kabáh

In January 1842, having begun their second trip to the region the October before, Stephens and Catherwood began visiting a chain of Maya sites strongly marked by the Puuc style. Although there was some knowledge of Uxmal and Chichén Itzá among American scholars, the site of Kabáh, which flourished in the ninth century and was abandoned in the 10th, was almost undocumented. Despite its being linked to Uxmal by a causeway—*sacbé* in Mayan—Stephens had difficulty locating the site, and is credited with being the first to provide a detailed survey, including of the surprising apartment interiors. "Here we were presented with [an] entirely new . . . [one apartment] consists of two parallel chambers communicating by a door in the center. The inner room is raised . . . higher than the front, and the ascent is by two stone steps carved out of a single block of stone, the lower one being in the form of a scroll. The sides of the steps are ornamented with sculpture, as is also the wall under the doorway. The whole design is graceful and pretty, and, as a mere matter of taste, the effect is extremely good. Here, on the first day of our arrival, we spread out our provisions, and ate to the memory of the former tenant."

A SCROLL-SHAPED STEP AT KABÁH. F. CATHERWOOD, NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO

THE GRACE OF AN ARCH

Labná

Continuing along the chain of Puuc-style sites, Stephens and Catherwood visited Labná, a spot so secluded that even many local people did not know of its existence. Stephens noted his admiration for these "decaying, but still proud memorials of a mysterious people." Flourishing between the seventh and 10th centuries, Labná is noted for its gateway constructed using a corbeled arch. Echoing the wall of masks at nearby Kabáh, the arch bears representations of Chac, the Maya god of rain—an important deity in a region lacking streams and rivers. Stephens hailed the arch for its "beauty of proportions … The effect of the whole combination was curious and striking, and, familiar as we were with ruins, the first view, with the great wall towering in front, created an impression that is not easily described." It took the workers three days to strip back the vegetation, allowing Catherwood to draw the arch in all its splendor.

THE CORBELED ARCH OF LABNÁ, F. CATHERWOOD. NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO.

THE CASTILLO, THE STEP PYRAMID OF KUKULKAN AT CHICHÉN ITZÁ, WITH ONE OF ITS TWO STONE SNAKE HEADS IN THE FOREGROUND. F. CATHERWOOD. NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO.

COLOSSAL CALENDAR

Chichén Itzá

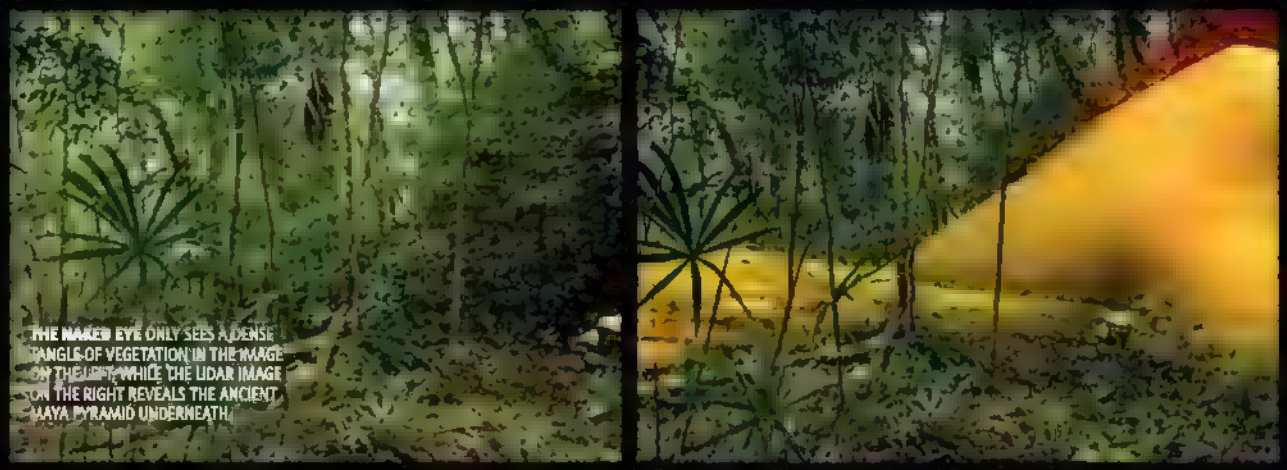
On March 15, 1842, Stephens and Catherwood knew they were approaching the ruins of Chichén Itzá, when the 100-foot-high step pyramid of Kukulkan—known locally as El Castillo, the castle—rose over the plain. *Chichén* means "mouth of wells," a reference to a nearby cenote, a sacred source of water in a region lacking rivers. The city was founded by the Maya in the 500s and was believed to have been overrun in the 10th century by the Itzá, a Mayan-speaking tribe, who probably built the pyramid. As elsewhere in Yucatán, Stephens and Catherwood were overwhelmed by the sense of fallen magnificence: "The buildings were large, and some were in good preservation; in general, the façades were not so elaborately ornamented as some we had seen, seemed of an old date, and the sculpture was ruder, but the interior apartments contained decorations and devices that were new to us, and powerfully interesting." He and Catherwood noted with wonder a feature that would later be connected with the scientific function of the pyramid: "On the ground at the foot of the staircase . . . are two colossal serpents' heads, ten feet in length, with mouths wide open and tongues protruding . . . No doubt they were emblematic of some religious belief and . . . must have excited feelings of solemn awe." Stephens's own sense of awe would have been compounded had he known the pyramid was an astronomical instrument: Each of its 365 steps represent a day in the year, and at sunset on the spring and autumn equinoxes, a shadow snake—the manifestation of Kukulkan, the Maya snake deity—slithers down the sides to join with the real stone heads at the base.

THICK JUNGLE RISES ABOVE A TOPPLED STELA AT COPÁN, IN AN 1844 COLORED LITHOGRAPH BY FREDERICK CATHERWOOD.

SUPERSTOCK/ALAMY

BENEATH THE JUNGLE

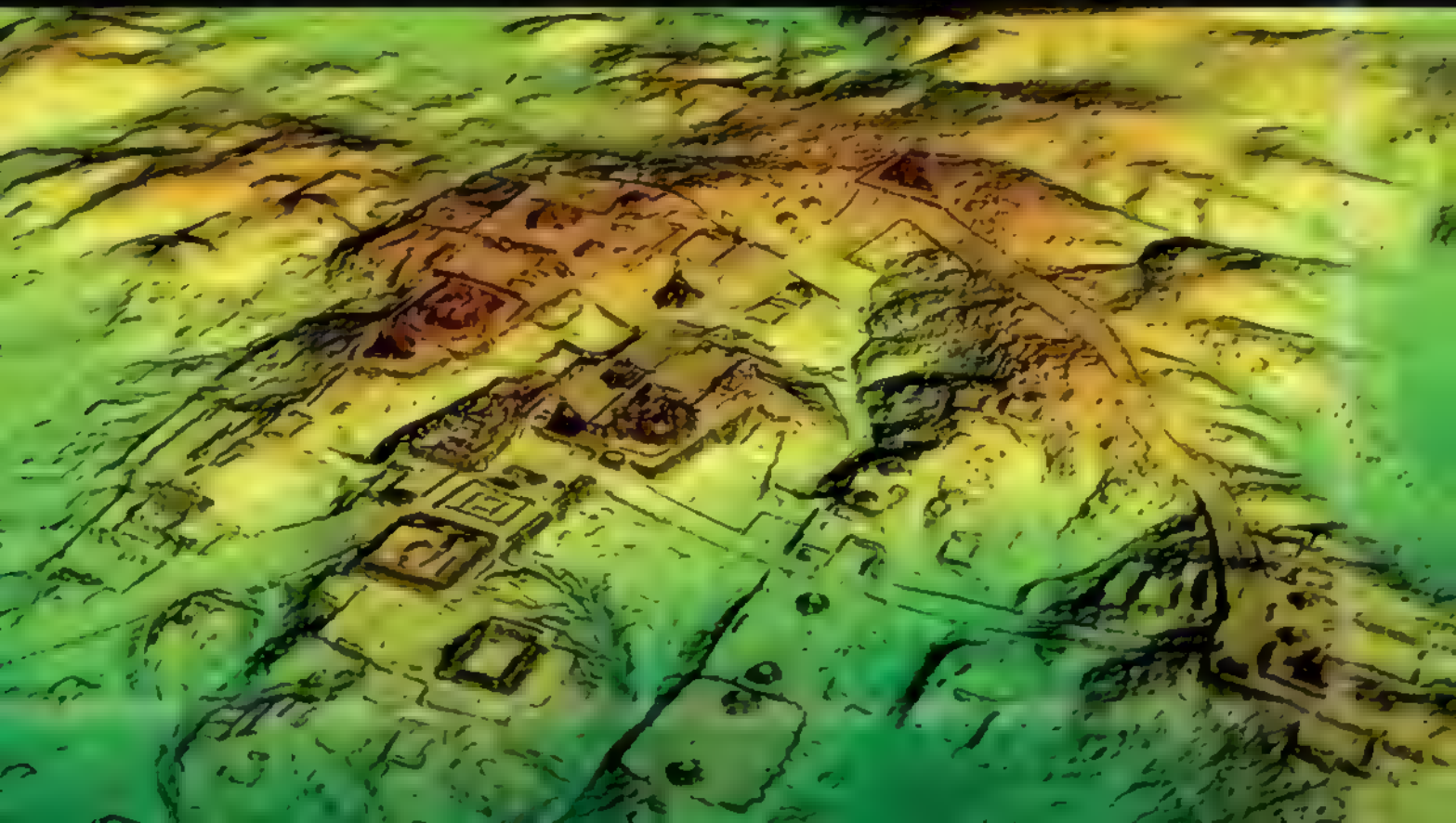
Alongside fever and war, another major obstacle complicated Stephens and Catherwood's unveiling of Maya cities in the 1840s: thick jungle growth enveloping many of the sites. Where the American and Briton only had 19th-century methods—machetes—to uncover the magnificence of a unified Maya culture, a group of researchers sponsored by National Geographic are now using revolutionary 21st-century technology to reveal that grand scope of Maya sites in Central America. They have found that these cities were more interconnected and heavily populated than anyone had imagined. Spearheaded by Guatemala's PACUNAM Foundation, the project centers on the biosphere reserve in the Petén area of Guatemala, a densely forested area near the city of Tikal. The group of researchers and National Geographic Explorers have used lidar ("light detection and ranging") to survey 800 square miles of the reserve and digitally peer beneath the canopy of vegetation to reveal the structures underneath without breaking a branch. A breathtaking, intricate world has been revealed—pyramids, highways, terracing, irrigation systems, and quarries. Researchers have revised estimates of its peak population from five million to as many as 15 million, all living in an interconnected community rather than isolated sites dotted around the rain forest. The lidar surveys, like Stephens and Catherwood before them, have revealed a grander, more sophisticated understanding of the Maya world and its people.



THE NAKED EYE ONLY SEES A DENSE TANGLE OF VEGETATION IN THE IMAGE ON THE LEFT, WHILE THE LIDAR IMAGE ON THE RIGHT REVEALS THE ANCIENT MAYA PYRAMID UNDERNEATH.

DENSE FOREST (above) engulfs the Maya city of Tikal in Guatemala and gives an idea of the obstacles faced by traditional, ground-based exploration. The same image passed through lidar technology (below) reveals an extensive, hidden network of structures linking the city together.

ALL PICTURES: WILD BLUE MEDIA

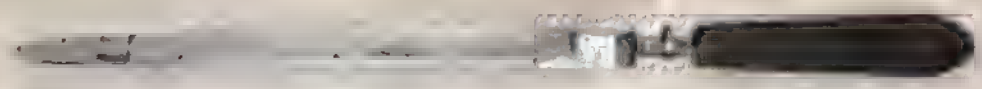


KILLER WITHOUT A FACE

The identity of Jack the Ripper has inspired 140 years of speculation and numerous portraits of the shadowy killer, including this modern engraving, above. Opposite, a knife believed to have been found by police alongside one of the Ripper's victims. Donald Rumbelow Collection

ILLUSTRATION: MARY EVANS/AKG

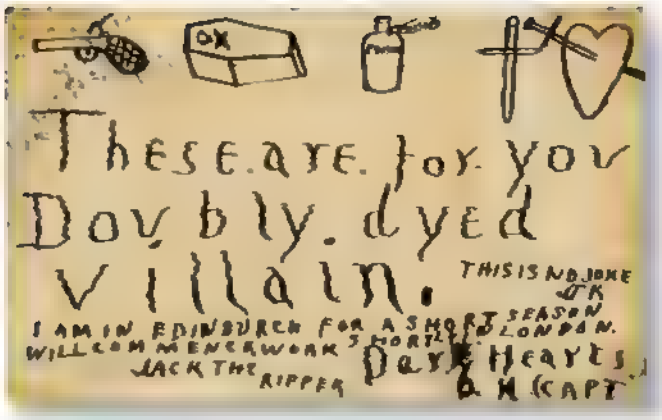
MAIN: MARY EVANS/GORDON PRESS



THE ENDURING MYSTERY OF JACK THE RIPPER

More than a century after the brutal murders of five Victorian women, the identity of their killer remains unknown. Relentless detectives continue to search for the true name of Jack the Ripper, who terrorized the streets of Whitechapel in 1888.

IGNACIO PEYRÓ



A POSTCARD, DATED OCTOBER 1888 AND SIGNED JACK THE RIPPER, IS NOW REGARDED AS A HOAX. THE POLICE RECEIVED HUNDREDS OF LETTERS LIKE IT, PURPORTING TO BE FROM THE KILLER.

BPA/ALBUM

At the end of the 19th century a foreign traveler only had to spend a day sightseeing in London to feel stirred by England's power. At Westminster the Houses of Parliament proudly proclaimed British global domination, while at Buckingham Palace Queen Victoria crowned the nation's golden age. All along the Thames to the sea, lined with ship after ship of merchants and the Royal Navy, a visitor could see for themselves the formidable maritime might of the largest empire the world had ever known.

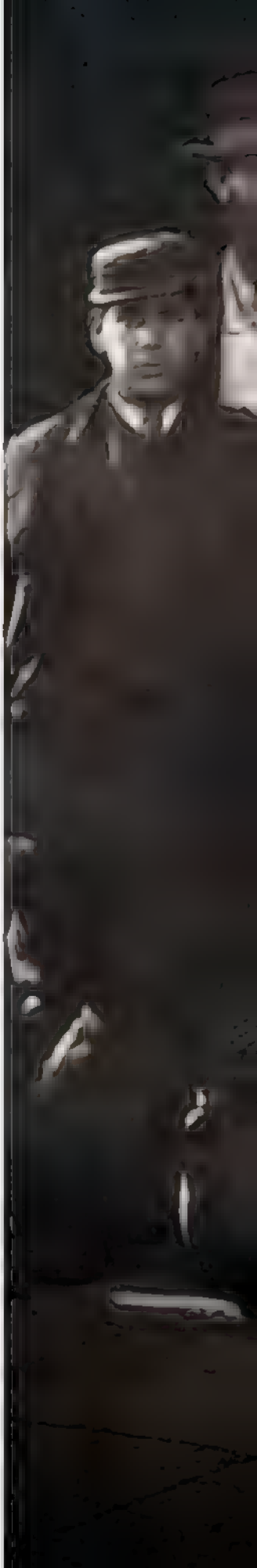
But all was not well with London. Joseph Conrad's 1899 novel, *Heart of Darkness*, describes London as "one of the dark places of the earth." To the theatergoers and shoppers thronging the well-lit, opulent streets of the West End, this description might have seemed out of place, but just three miles to the east, in the neighborhood of Whitechapel, disease, alcoholism, and poverty ravaged the lives of thousands of souls. It was a place that was, as the Diocese of London reported, "as unexplored as Timbuktu."

The mystery of Jack the Ripper began on August 31, 1888, when the body of a dead woman was found in a Whitechapel street. Her throat had been cut and her abdomen gouged open. Three months later, when what became known as the "Autumn of Terror" had ended, four more women had undergone the same grisly fate.

The killings electrified England. Wealthy Londoners were suddenly forced to take notice of a dangerous world located at home in their midst. As the hunt for the unidentified killer dragged on, well-to-do Victorian society, from Queen Victoria down, grew obsessed by the case. In the city Jack the Ripper became a stand-in for the prejudices and fears of London society. Anti-Semites used the murderer to defame the Jews of the East End; the poor blamed the rich and the rich blamed the poor; the terrible fate of the five dead women became fodder for the burgeoning sensationalist press, while social activists seized on the case to clamor for relief from urban poverty.

Above all, the Ripper case laid bare an uncomfortable irony: At the heart of a city that prided itself on spreading Pax Britannica around the world, a murderer walked free—and none of the authorities could stop him.

When the murders abruptly ceased in November 1888, the mystery only deepened and grew. Nearly 140 years later, Jack the Ripper has become arguably the most infamous and most mythologized serial killer.



HARD TIMES
Taken more than a decade before the Ripper murders, this image of the lower classes of Whitechapel appeared in photographer John Thomson and journalist Adolphe Smith's *Street Life in London* (1877). Smith wrote: "We have sought to portray these harder phases of life, bringing to bear the precision of photography … to present true types of the London poor."

MUSEUM OF LONDON/BRIDGEMAN

1888: A MYSTERY UNFOLDS

August 31
Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols is murdered. Investigation will reveal that she is Jack the Ripper's first victim.

September 1-7
Police begin questioning Whitechapel prostitutes to assemble a list of suspects.

September 8
The second Ripper victim, Annie Chapman, is discovered savagely murdered.

September 27
The Central News Agency receives a letter from a person claiming to be the killer. It is signed "Jack the Ripper."

September 30
In one night Jack the Ripper slays two women: Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes.

October
More letters from the would-be killer are received by the police, the press, and Whitechapel officials. Most are hoaxes, but three are believed genuine.

November 9
Mary Jane Kelly is murdered. After her death, the Ripper killings abruptly stop.

VICTORIA, QUEEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND FROM 1837 TO 1901. PORTRAIT ON THE BACK OF A SILVER CROWN

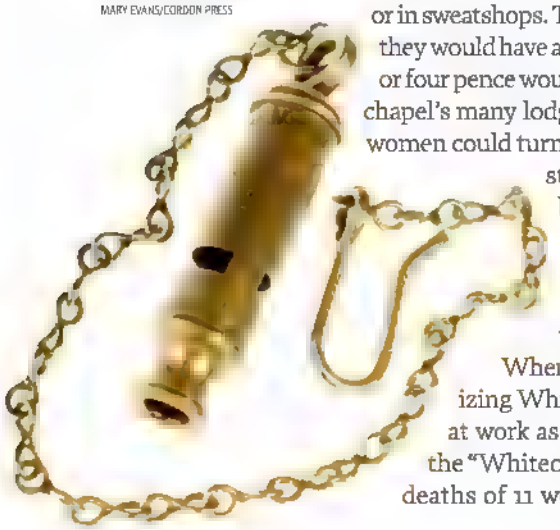
ORONOZ/ALBUM

MARY ANN NICHOLS'S BODY WAS FOUND CLOSE TO WOODS BUILDINGS, NEAR BUCKS ROW OFF WHITECHAPEL ROAD.

LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/AC

NOISEMAKERS
METROPOLITAN POLICE STARTED CARRYING BRASS WHISTLES (BELOW), INSTEAD OF HEAVY WOODEN RATTLES, IN 1884

MARY EVANS/CORDON PRESS



The Murders

In the late 19th century, life for lower-class women in London was difficult. Many of them worked for meager wages as domestic servants or in sweatshops. Their daily wages often meant they would have a place to sleep at night: Three or four pence would buy a bed in one of Whitechapel's many lodging houses. In desperation, women could turn to prostitution, and certain streets of London's East End became notorious destinations for the sex trade, of which the Ripper's victims had all been working at the time of their deaths.

When Jack the Ripper was terrorizing Whitechapel, other killers were at work as well. Collectively known as the "Whitechapel Murders," the violent deaths of 11 women revealed the dangers facing lower-class women at the time. Of these murders, most experts agree that Jack the Ripper was responsible for the five that occurred from August through November 1888.

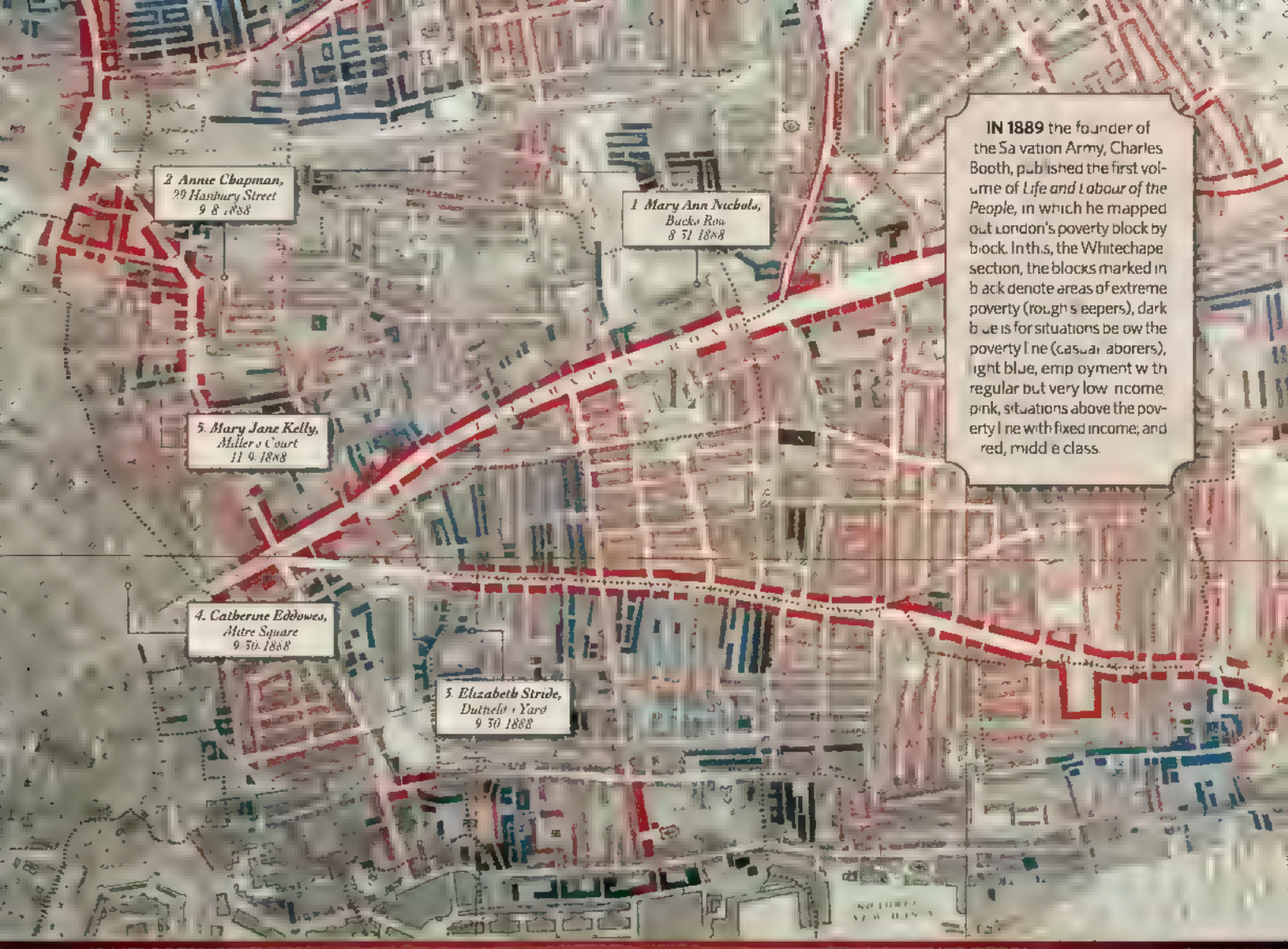
Discovered in the early morning hours of August 31, Mary Ann Nichols, also known as Polly, was a 43-year-old mother of five and the first confirmed victim of Jack the Ripper. The daughter of a blacksmith, she spent much of her youth in various poorhouses of the capital. Abandoned by her husband, she earned a living through workhouses, prostitution, and petty theft. Like many women of her class, her name might have been lost to time—had she not been murdered that August night.

One week later, Annie Chapman, a 47-year-old widow and mother, was discovered on September 8 shortly before 6 a.m. in a yard on Hanbury Street. Her injuries appeared similar to Nichols's, but she was missing some of her internal organs. At the end of the month, the killer would claim two more lives in one night: Elizabeth Stride, age 45, and Catherine Eddowes, age 46. The last official victim met her death on November 9, 1888: The body of 25-year-old Mary Jane Kelly was discovered brutally mutilated in a lodging house in Miller's Court. All residents of Whitechapel, these women lived in poverty, which left them vulnerable to the predator prowling the streets.

The Investigation

From the beginning of the investigation, Scotland Yard was flummoxed. The only thing known for sure about Jack the Ripper—assuming, as most theorists do, that he acted alone—is that he killed women. According to Edmund Reid, one of the detectives assigned to investigate the case, these were the only facts: The five women were all active or former prostitutes; all of the victims were from the lower class; all lived no more than a quarter of a mile from one another; and all the murders were committed after pub closing time.

To Reid's key facts can be added another salient detail: No one ever heard a single scream or cry for help, unusual for such a densely populated neighborhood. None of the bodies exhibited defense wounds, such as slashes or bruising on the hands and forearms. The one solid, reported sighting of the killer was on the



IN 1889 the founder of the Salvation Army, Charles Booth, published the first volume of *Life and Labour of the People*, in which he mapped out London's poverty block by block. In this, the Whitechapel section, the blocks marked in black denote areas of extreme poverty (rough sleepers), dark blue is for situations below the poverty line (casual laborers), light blue, employment with regular but very low income, pink, situations above the poverty line with fixed income; and red, middle class.

MUSEUM OF LONDON/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

THE SCENE OF THE CRIMES

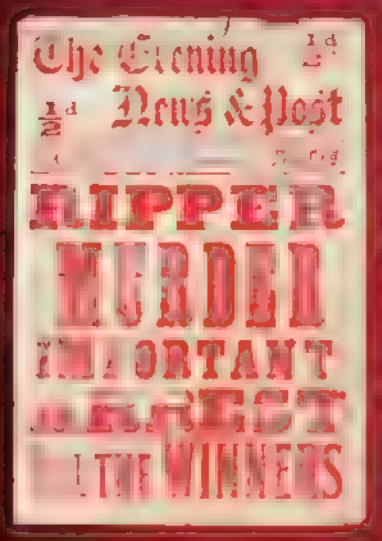
NAMED FOR a parish church built in the 13th century, the Whitechapel district is located in London's East End. It is traversed by Whitechapel Road, part of the ancient highway between London and Norwich. In the 19th century members of the English working class and Irish and Jewish immigrants gravitated to Whitechapel, attracted by its proximity to the docks. The neighborhood grew overcrowded, and poverty and alcohol abuse became visible problems for its residents. After 1880 another wave of immigrants, many from Russia and Poland, came to London and settled in Whitechapel, compounding the existing problems and stirring up English resentment toward the new immigrants. In his 1861 book *Ragged London*, John Hollingshead describes the lanes off the Whitechapel Road as "thousands of closely packed nests, full to overflowing with dirt, misery, and rags." Children, Hollingshead reported, "play in the streets . . . their fathers and mothers mope in cellars or garrets; their [grandparents] huddle and die in the same miserable dustbins." While poverty, violence, and crime were pressing issues for Whitechapel, it was not the only part of London experiencing these social ills. Chelsea, Westminster, Lambeth, and Marylebone contained crime-ridden sections as well but were less well known for them. The Jack the Ripper murders bolstered Whitechapel's seedy reputation for being a center of vice and villainy.

WOMAN AND BABY,
STREET LIFE IN LONDON,
BY J. THOMSON AND A. SMITH, 1877

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Ripped From the Headlines

NOT EVEN DURING THE RIOTS OF 1886 have I seen London so thoroughly excited as it is tonight," wrote one breathless reporter following the murder of Annie Chapman on September 8, 1888. "The Whitechapel fiend murdered his fourth victim this morning and still continues undetected, unseen, and unknown." The attentive reader will note that—unlike the consensus view of the Ripper case, in which Annie was the *second* victim—the writer here is attributing previous murders in the district to the killer. It is one insight into the way in which the press drew its own muddled conclusions and whipped up panic. The 1880s were a boom period for the sensationalist press. Publications like the *Illustrated Police News* seized on the Ripper case to feed public hunger for gory crimes while reveling in the shortcomings of the police. Ethnic tensions were also ratcheted up by the press, which laid much emphasis on the "foreignness" of the killer's appearance.



NEWSPAPER POSTER ANNOUNCING ARREST OF A SUSPECT, FEBRUARY 1889
BRIDGEMAN/ACI

POSTMORTEM PHOTOGRAPH OF ELIZABETH STRIDE TAKEN BY SCOTLAND YARD. THE LARGE CAMERAS USED AT THAT TIME WERE UNABLE TO POINT DOWNWARD, SO BODIES WERE HELD UP AGAINST A WALL IN ORDER TO TAKE THE PICTURE
RUE DES ARCHIVES/AKG-IMAGES

early morning of September 8, 1888, when a woman saw Annie Chapman, accompanied by a "foreigner" of medium height, wrapped in a dark cloak. They are believed to have met just after 5:30 a.m., and her body was found half an hour later. Like all of his other victims, there were no signs of resistance, and no one heard her cry out.

The other aspect that all the cases had in common was, of course, the killer's use of a knife and his customary pattern of not only killing the women but defiling their dead bodies. At least three of his victims were found with internal organs removed, a detail that drove the sensationalist press of the day into a frenzy. A wave of panic spread across the whole East End of London.

Public fascination spiked after September 27, 1888, when both the Central News Agency and the police received a letter claiming to be from the killer. He taunted them for pursuing false leads and vowed in a broad London English: "I am down on whores and I shan't quit ripping them till I do get buckled." Three days later, the mutilated bodies of Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes were found.

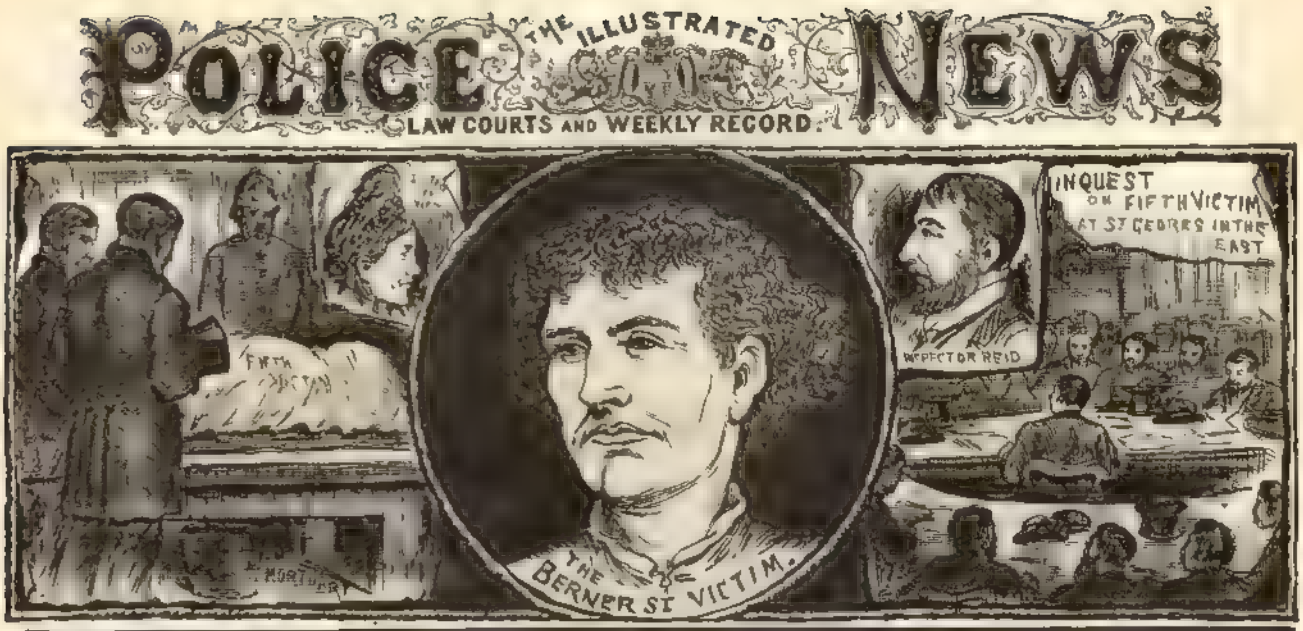
Many believe this letter is a hoax, but its signature, "Jack the Ripper," gave the unknown killer his moniker. Hundreds of other letters followed, most of which were confirmed hoaxes. A few seemed genuine, including an October missive—datelined "from hell"—with which was enclosed a human kidney, supposedly from one of the victims.

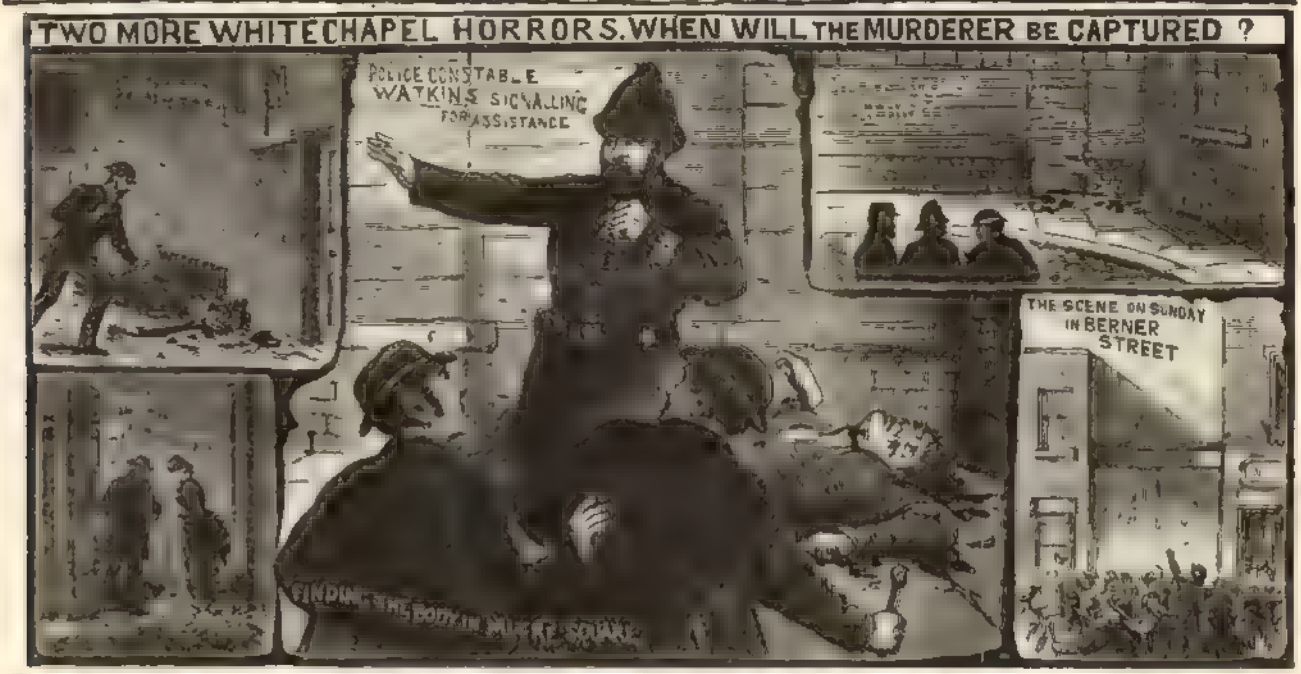
Following the discovery of the body of Mary Jane Kelly in November, physician Thomas Bond was invited to perform an autopsy on her remains. His report makes for stomach-churning reading, even today. In the course of his grim task, Bond noted similarities with the four previous deaths. The murderer slashed the victim's throat from one side to the other and then cut open the abdominal cavity. A theory mulled by the police was that the Ripper was a physician or even a surgeon, but Bond—who knew a thing or two about incisions—dismissed this: True to his nickname, the murderer was no precise cutter, and lacked "even the technical knowledge of a butcher or horse slaughterer."

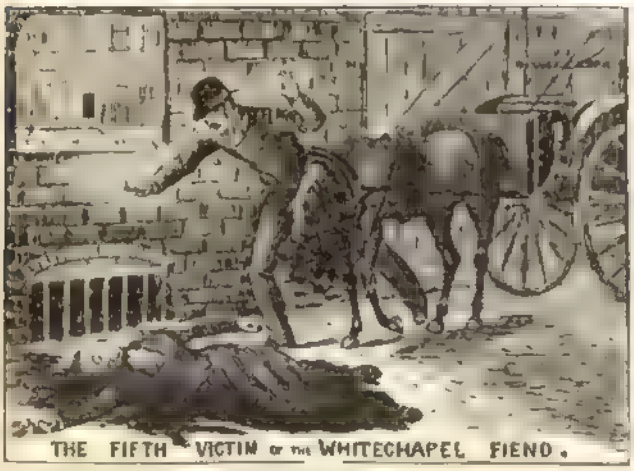
Bond also attempted to understand the psychology of the killer, an early exercise in criminal profiling. It was not enough for the Ripper to kill, he deduced: He also had to inflict excessive violence to the bodies afterward: "The murderer must have been a man of physical strength and of great coolness and daring." Even so, he concluded, he "is quite likely to be a quiet, inoffensive looking man probably middle-aged and neatly and respectably dressed."

The Suspects

Whitechapel's closeness to the London docks led the police to think the killer might have been a sailor passing through or perhaps a stevedore. At the time of the murders, the police investigation centered on local characters. Among these were Aaron Kosminski and John "Jack" Pizer, both working-class men. Francis Tumblety was an American-born quack doctor who possessed a collection of human organs and, it was


THE ILLUSTRATED
POLICE NEWS
LAW COURTS AND WEEKLY RECORD.
INQUEST ON FIFTH VICTIM AT ST GEORGE'S IN THE EAST
INSPECTOR REID
THE BERNER ST VICTIM.


TWO MORE WHITECHAPEL HORRORS. WHEN WILL THE MURDERER BE CAPTURED ?
POLICE CONSTABLE WATKINS SIGNALLING FOR ASSISTANCE
THE SCENE ON SUNDAY IN BERNER STREET


THE FIFTH VICTIM OF THE WHITECHAPEL FIEND.

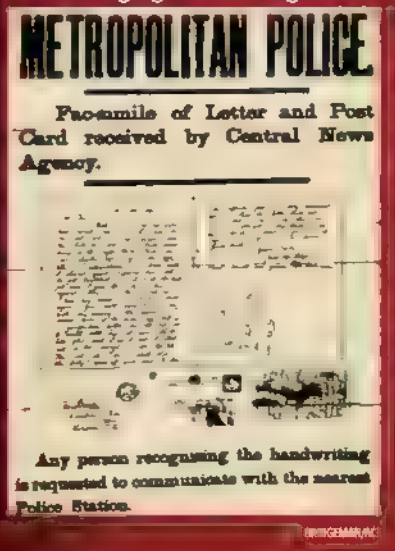
FINDING THE MUTILATED BODY IN MITRE SQARE.

LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/AC

THE *ILLUSTRATED POLICE NEWS*, A SENSATIONALIST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER THAT COVERED CRIME, REPORTED EXTENSIVELY ON THE RIPPER CASE.

Jack the Ripper's Sixth Victim

IT IS THE STUFF OF movie plots, and every police chief's nightmare: A killer is on the loose, panic is spreading, and the killer appears to be mocking his pursuers. Captained by Sir Charles Warren, London's Metropolitan Police struggled from the moment Mary Ann Nichols's body was found on August 31, 1888. As the murders mounted, and the cases against suspects fell apart, the press picked over the police's perceived failures. They were slow to react to the murders; they took too few photographs; they destroyed evidence. Today sympathetic historians highlight the challenge of even basic policing in the East End, as well as the flow of misinformation, and suspected hoax letters, produced by the press. But the media were merciless: In October 1888 the *Cork Examiner* reported "people are asking whether Warren is a criminal or an imbecile?" In November, one day before the murder of Mary Ann Kelly, Warren resigned, a decision greeted by cheers in the House of Commons.


METROPOLITAN POLICE

Fac-simile of Letter and Post Card received by Central News Agency.

Any person recognising the handwriting is requested to communicate with the nearest Police Station.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

POLICE POSTER REQUESTING INFORMATION ABOUT A POSTCARD SIGNED BY JACK THE RIPPER (OCT. 1888)

SIR CHARLES WARREN, CHIEF OF THE LONDON METROPOLITAN POLICE. HIS HANDLING OF THE RIPPER CASE LED TO HIS RESIGNATION IN NOVEMBER 1888.

BRIDGEMAN/ACI

reported, detested prostitutes. Montague John Druitt, who was from a wealthy background but had fallen on hard times, was regarded as sexually deviant. Seweryn Klosowski was a known poisoner, but not, so far as anyone knew, a stabber and mutilator. Unrelated to this police inquiry was the career of another poisoner, Thomas Neill Cream, who killed young prostitutes in the nearby borough of Lambeth by giving them strychnine-laced drinks. On being hung, he is said to have cried out, "I am Jack the—" This is highly unlikely, as at the time of the Ripper murders, Cream was in the United States, being held near Chicago in a Joliet jail.

The savagery of the killings prompted conclusions that only the feared "other" could perpetrate such wickedness, leading to a slew of prejudiced accusations against people of different ethnicities and traditions. The fact that Whitechapel was home to many Jews—and that two of the early suspects, Pizer and Kosminski, were Jews—fueled anti-Semitic feelings at the time. Pizer was suspected of being an unidentified and malevolent prowler, nicknamed Leather Apron by the press. The media characterized this figure as Jewish, with one article noting that local women "are united in the belief that he is a Jew or of Jewish parentage."

Following the murder of Catherine Eddowes on September 30, police found a message scrawled in chalk above where her bloodstained apron was found. There are various versions recorded by the police as to what exactly was written there. One of the variants was: "The Juwes are the men that Will not be Blamed for nothing." Many theories have been put forward to explain these words, but no photograph of them exists—the police erased the message soon after discovering it, so as to prevent anti-Semitic riots.

The cases against the early suspects fell apart, either because of a lack of evidence or because suspects had solid alibis. The police force came under increasing attack in the press, eventually leading to the resignation of the Scotland Yard chief, Sir Charles Warren. The new lead investigator, Melville Macnaghten, was popular with the public, but even he did not solve the crime.

Theories and Notions

As the Ripper case remained open, an industry sprung up around it. Jack the Ripper has been the subject of more than a hundred nonfiction books, dozens of novels, several television series, and more than 20 films. The mystery has even given birth to an entire discipline known as "Ripperology," which specializes in exhaustive research about the case and theories behind the murders.

Ripperologists have assembled a varied lineup of suspects, which seems to keep growing. Ranging from members of the royal family to the humblest Whitechapel resident, the variety of suspects is staggering: William Gladstone, British prime minister; a relative of Winston Churchill; and the English painter Walter Sickert—even though no credible evidence has ever been produced to substantiate these claims.

Another theory, adapting the plot of Edgar Allan Poe's seminal 1841 short story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," postulated that the Ripper

BLIND-MAN'S BUFF.

(As played by the Police.)

"TURN ROUND THREE TIMES,
AND CATCH WHOM YOU MAY!"

"BLIND-MAN'S BUFF," AN ENGRAVING BY JOHN TENNIEL, SATIRIZING SCOTLAND YARD'S PERCEIVED INCOMPETENCE IN THE JACK THE RIPPER INVESTIGATION. *PUNCH* SEPTEMBER 1888

ALAMY/AC

MONTAGUE J. DRUITT WAS 31 YEARS OLD IN 1888 WHEN HIS BODY WAS FOUND FLOATING IN THE THAMES.

(1)

WALTER SICKERT. IN A PHOTOGRAPH FROM AROUND 1884. HE WAS 28 YEARS OLD WHEN THE MURDERS TOOK PLACE

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

Melville Macnaghten ran the Metropolitan Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) from 1890 and was admired as a brilliant sleuth with an uncanny memory, who later established fingerprinting as a forensic tool. It was Macnaghten who helped identify the five canonical Ripper victims by linking common characteristics of the crimes. Macnaghten personally believed Montague John Druitt to be the killer, but little direct evidence can link him to the murders. Over the years, many other sleuths have tried to solve the case and have pointed a finger at different culprits.

(1) *Montague J. Druitt*

Macnaghten's chief suspect, Druitt was born into a middle-class family with a history of mental illness. Well educated and trained as a lawyer, he taught at a boarding school but was discharged for unknown reasons sometime in 1888. Police believe he killed himself by jumping into the Thames; his body was found on December 31, 1888, after having been in the icy waters for about a month. Despite Macnaghten's later idea that Druitt was the Ripper, senior police officials stated that nothing implicated him.

(2) *Aaron Kosminski*

Some officials were convinced at the time that the perpetrator was Aaron Kosminski (below), a Polish barber known to have mental health issues. This theory gained more weight in 2014, when a shawl believed to have belonged to Catherine Eddowes was tested, and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) similar to Kosminski's was found. Critics pointed out that his mtDNA subtype is very common, weakening the idea of it being a "smoking gun."

(2)

◀ **AARON KOSMINSKI,** IN A SKETCH FROM THE PERIOD

ASPINALL'S ENAMEL.
PUCK
LEATHER APRON, DEPICTED LOOKING AT THE SUSPECTS' FACES ON A POSTER, *PUCK* MAGAZINE, SEPTEMBER 1889
ALBERT VICTOR, DUKE OF CLARENCE, IN A COLORED PHOTOGRAPH FROM CIRCA 1890

LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: ALEX RAMSEY/ALAMY; BRIDGEMAN IMAGES; LONDON PRESS AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES; AFP/GETTY IMAGES; BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

(3) *Walter Sickert*

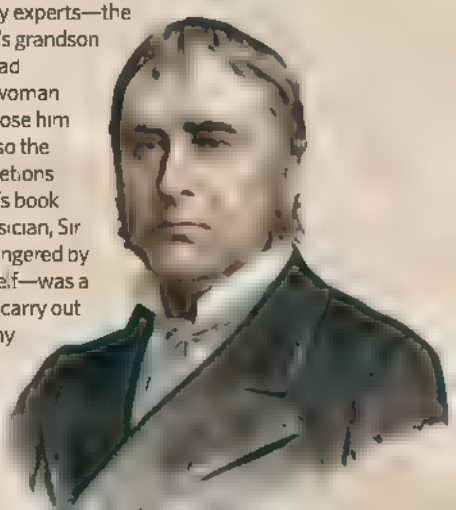
Several sleuths, most famously mystery author Patricia Cornwell, believe British painter Walter Sickert was Jack the Ripper. The artist's works focused on sexuality and violence, themes common to life in the East End. He even titled one painting "Jack the Ripper's Bedroom." Cornwell funded DNA testing of several "Ripper" letters, despite no proof that the real killer sent them. So far, none of the tests have given a conclusive connection to Sickert's DNA

(4) *John Pizer*

After the murder of Mary Ann Nichols, the press reported on a sinister figure nicknamed Leather Apron who had been harassing women in Whitechapel. Following the death of Annie Chapman, the police arrested John Pizer, a Jewish cobbler, known for wearing a leather apron around the streets. Coverage of the crimes revealed a strong anti-Semitic bias prevalent in London at the time. Pizer's alibis were strong, and he was released without charges.

(5) *A Royal Conspiracy*

In his 1976 book, *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution,* British writer Stephen Knight argued that the Ripper murders were the result of a conspiracy orchestrated by the royal family. According to this theory—completely discredited by experts—the Duke of Clarence, Queen Victoria's grandson and second in line to the throne, had fathered a child with an East End woman. Her friends had threatened to expose him unless he paid them a hefty sum, so the royal family covered up his indiscretions by killing the blackmailers. Knight's book claimed the queen's personal physician, Sir William W. Gull—who has been fingered by other Ripperologists as Jack himself—was a part of the conspiracy and helped carry out the killings to protect the monarchy



SIR WILLIAM W. GULL, THE PERSONAL PHYSICIAN OF QUEEN VICTORIA, IN A LATE 19TH-CENTURY ENGRAVING ▶

"THE NEMESIS OF NEGLECT," AN ENGRAVING IN *PUNCH*, SEPTEMBER 1888

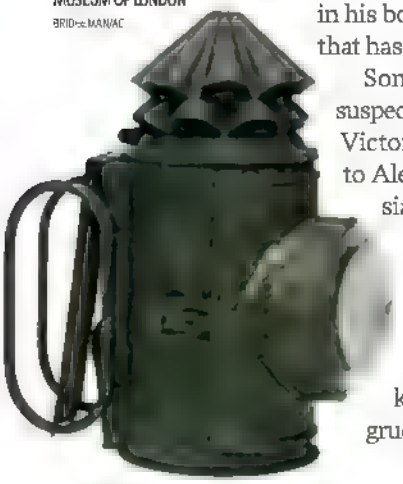
LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/AC

was not a man but an ape who had escaped from the zoo. Perhaps one of the most outlandish ideas points the finger at Charles Dodgson, better known by his pseudonym Lewis Carroll and author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. A 1996 book claimed that unscrambled anagrams in his books revealed the killings, an argument that has since been dismantled by historians.

Some have suggested wealthy doctors as suspects, including Sir William W. Gull, Queen Victoria's personal physician. Others point to Alexander Pedachenko, an agent of Russia's tzarist secret police, who supposedly committed the crimes to stain Scotland Yard's reputation. The plot is detailed in a later document, now lost, written by none other than Rasputin. More recent suspects include American serial killer H. H. Holmes. Notorious for several gruesome murders during the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, it is also claimed he was Jack the Ripper. The only thing these diverse hypotheses have in common is this: None have been convincing enough to achieve the consensus necessary to close the case for good.

A BULL'S-EYE LAMP, FROM THE TIME OF THE MURDERS, WAS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A POLICE OFFICER'S EQUIPMENT WHILE PATROLLING THE LONDON STREETS AT NIGHT. MUSEUM OF LONDON

BRIDGEMAN/AC



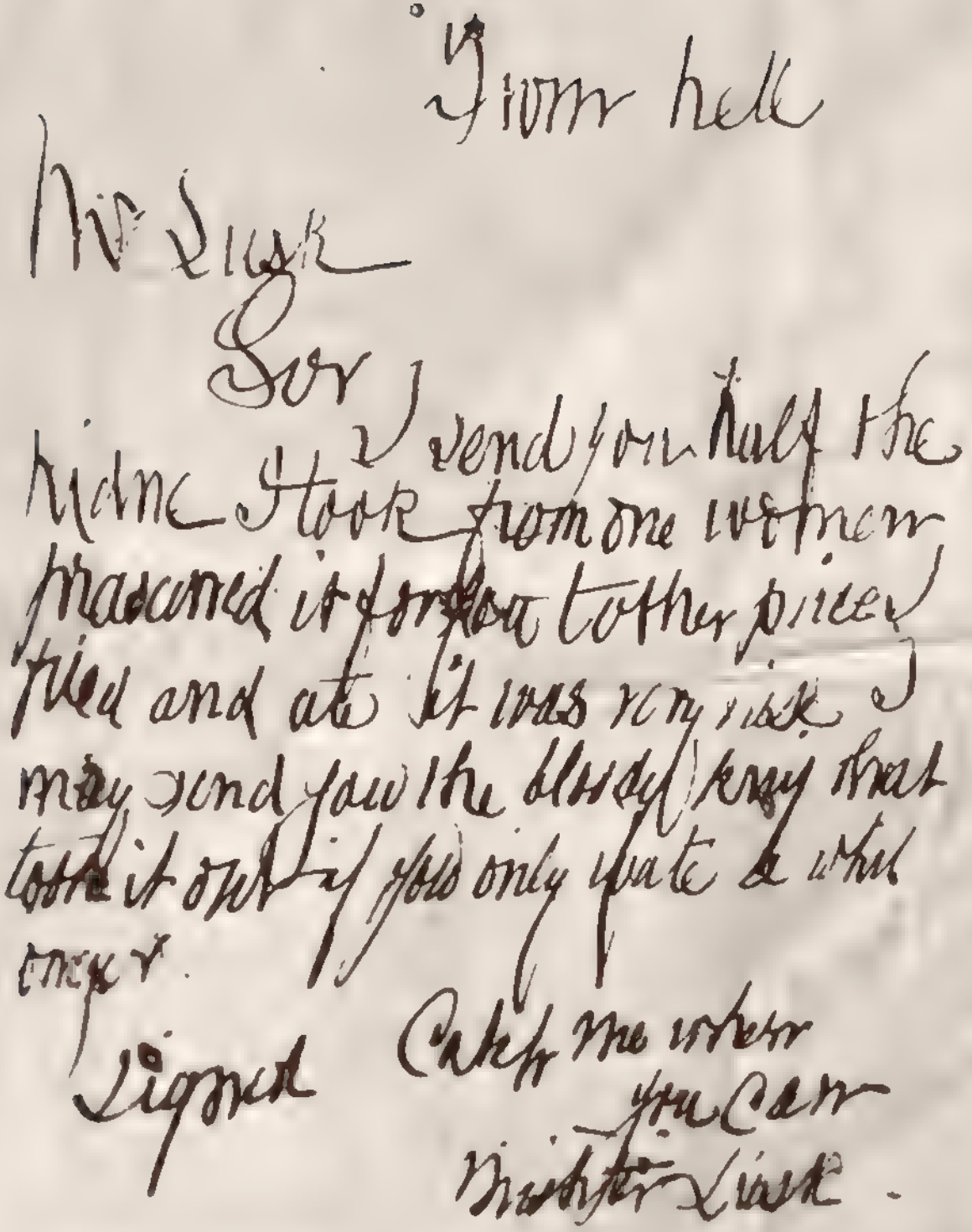
Rich and Poor

The carnage of the Ripper murders did result in some positive social change. Contempt for the lower classes was ingrained in upper-class thinking. Instead of seeing prostitution as a consequence of poverty, many better-off Londoners saw these women's decisions as a question of morality and not a question of survival. They subscribed to a prevailing idea that many at the bottom of the social heap lived the way they did because of bad character. By the time of the Ripper murders, social Darwinism—the application of Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection to human groups—reinforced this idea.

Little by little, however, the consensus shifted toward tackling the roots of poverty. Founded in Whitechapel in the 1860s, the Salvation Army was already helping prostitutes, and attempting to wean people off the alcohol that had so blighted the lives of the Ripper's victims. Shaken by the conditions exposed by the Whitechapel murders, conservatives also started calling for reform, motivated partly by enlightened self-interest: Improving conditions would lessen the chances of social revolt.

The murders also prompted socialists to call for meaningful reform. One memorably fiery response to the Ripper case was penned by George Bernard Shaw, who later shot to fame for his satirical play *Pygmalion*, the basis for the hit musical *My Fair Lady*. In September 1888 Shaw wrote in the *Star* newspaper that the Whitechapel murders had forced the wealthy to admit their mistreatment of the poor. With a sardonic twist, Shaw opined that the murderer was doing more to advance the cause of reform than years of political agitation had: "Allow me to make a comment on the success of the Whitechapel murderer in calling attention for a moment to the social question . . . The one argument that touches your lady and gentleman, is the knife."

IGNACIO PEYRÓ IS DIRECTOR OF THE CERVANTES INSTITUTE IN LONDON, ENGLAND, AND HAS WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY ON BRITISH HISTORY AND CULTURE


From hell

Mr Lusk

Sor I send you half the
kidne I took from one woman
prasarved it for you tother piece
fried and ate it was very nice I
may send you the bloody knif that
took it out if you only wate a whil
longer

signed Catch me when you can

Mishter Lusk

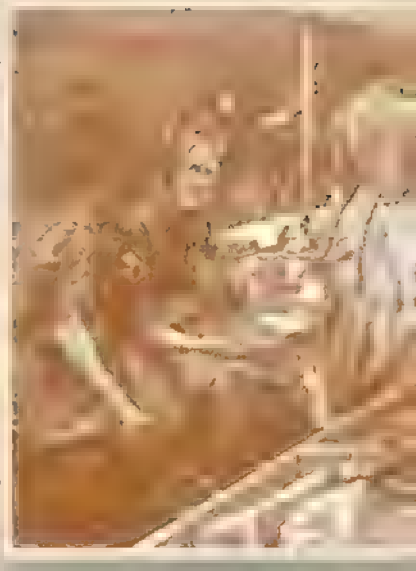
RUMORS FROM HELL

In October 1888 George Lusk of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, a volunteer police force, received a small box in the mail. Inside it was a letter (above)—and half a human kidney. Known as the "From Hell" letter, the author claims to be the killer, describes his revolting behavior, and taunts Lusk to try to catch him. The text reads: *"From hell / Mr Lusk, Sor I send you half the Kidne I took from one woman and prasarved it for you [.] tother piece I fried and ate it was very nise. I may send you the bloody knif that took it out if you only wate a whil longer / signed Catch me when you can Mishter Lusk."* Dr. Thomas Horrocks Openshaw of the London Pathological Museum examined the organ and identified it as a portion of a human left kidney. The news caused a sensation in the press: Catherine Eddowes (found on September 30) had had her left kidney removed. The press also reported unsubstantiated rumors that it showed damage from excessive drinking, a behavior attributed to Eddowes in life. ✱

STEVE MCCURRY, NGC

FIVE WOMEN OF WHITECHAPEL

The lives of those who fell to Jack the Ripper were preserved by their deaths. Poor women in Whitechapel often lived in the shadows, those outside their circles knowing or caring little about their hardships. Like many poor women of the time, these five women were bound together in the same cycle of poverty, violence, abandonment, and addiction.



A SHELTER FOR DESTITUTE WOMEN IN WHITECHAPEL RUN BY THE SALVATION ARMY ENGRAVING BY CHARLES PAUL RENOUARD

LOOK AND LEARN/ BRIDGEMAN/AC

When they could, poor Whitechapel women would pay a few pennies for a bed in a common lodging house. These large, crowded, often filthy dormitories nevertheless offered some security and warmth. Payment had to be made in advance, however, and women would often turn to prostitution to earn the fee to avoid sleeping in the streets.

ON THE NIGHTS THEY WERE KILLED, Mary Ann Nichols (August 31) and Annie Chapman (September 8) had gone in search of clients so they could pay for a bed. Prostitution was a practical way to supplement other types of badly paid and irregular work: Nichols worked as a domestic servant. Chapman did crochet work and sold flowers. Elizabeth Stride cleaned rooms. Catherine Eddowes had just arrived back in London after hop-picking in Kent. Financial security eluded all five of these women, and turning to sex work was a quick and easy way to earn money to survive.

SEVERAL OF THE RIPPER'S VICTIMS lacked the financial support of a husband and the social protections marriage provided at the time. Nichols's husband left her because of her drinking. Chapman and her husband had separated, but he continued to send her money until he died. Stride's husband had also died. Eddowes lived with a man in a lodging house, but she could not be with him on the night she was killed because she could not afford the bed. Mary Jane Kelly was also a widow.

DORSET STREET, TERMED "THE WORST STREET IN LONDON" WAS NEAR THE SCENE OF MARY JANE KELLY'S MURDER. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AROUND 1902

HOMELESS WOMEN SHIVERING IN WHITECHAPEL ON A FREEZING NIGHT. 1888 NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATION

ALBUM

LIKE MANY WHITECHAPEL CITIZENS, the Ripper's victims had all found solace in alcohol. Nichols had struggled with alcoholism for most of her adult life. On the nights of their murders, witnesses reported seeing Nichols, Chapman, Eddowes, and Kelly drunk. Eddowes had even passed out from drinking and spent a few hours recovering in a police station. Loneliness, necessity, homelessness, and the need for security had already made them vulnerable, but intoxication would have dulled their senses and lowered their defenses further, making it hard to fight back against the brutal murderer who stalked the streets of Whitechapel in 1888. ✦

...ER-COURT MURDER, WHITECHAPEL. SITE OF MARY KELLY'S LODG...

...LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN/ACI

Who was the Ripper's last victim?

The police identified five murders as being committed by Jack the Ripper, but some experts believe there may be as many as 11 killings. The last of the five "canonical" victims is Mary Jane Kelly (also known as Marie Jeanette), murdered in her room in Miller's Court (above). To the residents of Whitechapel, the months following her death were thankfully free of more grisly discoveries, but the hiatus came to an end on July 16, 1889, when the body of Alice McKenzie was found with her throat slit and her abdomen mutilated. Dr Thomas Bond, who had conducted Kelly's autopsy, studied the corpse and concluded that McKenzie was another victim of the Ripper. Even though the police disagreed with Bond's opinion, the press stirred up a frenzy claiming that the Ripper had returned.

MARY JANE KELLY'S BURIAL SITE AT ST.PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CEMETERY, LONDON

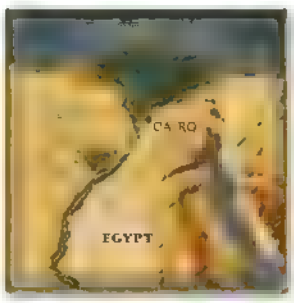
MAURICE SAVAGE/ALAMY/AC

The Buried Statues of King Menkaure

The pharaoh with the smallest pyramid was at the center of one of Egypt's biggest finds when American scholar George Reisner unearthed the temple of Menkaure and its artistic masterpieces in 1908.

The three great pyramids of Egypt have stood tall for some 4,500 years. By the late 1800s erosion on the Giza plateau raised fears among scholars that the grand structures were threatened. Illicit digging in the area was the suspected cause, and a team of scholars knew that a solution was necessary.

In 1902 a group of them met at a Cairo hotel to come up with a plan. In attendance were German Ludwig Borchardt, who would discover the Nefertiti bust in 1912; Italian Ernesto Schiaparelli, who in 1904 would find the tomb of Nefertari, queen of Ramses II; and George Reisner—known as the "American Flinders Petrie" because his cautious methods were compared to that of the celebrated British Egyptologist. The group decided to divide up the plateau among them so that teams could organize and conduct their own excavations.



Standing on the veranda, they drew lots from a hat. Borchardt won the Pyramid of Khafre, and Schiaparelli part of the cemetery to the north. Reisner picked the funerary complex of the pharaoh Menkaure, a section that would yield some of the most iconic artworks from the Old Kingdom.

Buried Treasure

Menkaure, the sixth ruler of Egypt's 4th dynasty, was buried in the smallest of the three great pyramids. His father Khafre and his grandfather Khufu (Cheops in Greek) rested in the other two. Built between 2550 and 2490 B.C., the Giza Pyramids stand as an eternal symbol of Egypt.

This fate, however, was not shared by Menkaure's mortuary temples, which Reisner believed to be located on the pyramid's eastern side. These temples would be the center of a cult to worship the dead pharaoh. Evidence suggests that Menkaure's temples operated for nearly three centuries after the pharaoh's death. After his cult declined, so did the temples, and they disappeared beneath the sands.

The Pyramid of Menkaure had long ago been plundered by robbers in the ancient era. Centuries later, other Menkaure artifacts would be lost to time as well. In the 1830s British soldier Richard Vyse entered the structure and

SEEING TRIPLE Taken in 1908, a photo reveals two of Menkaure's triad sculptures soon after their discovery at Menkaure's Valley Temple in Giza. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

1902
George Reisner is granted the right to excavate the funerary complex near the Pyramid of Menkaure

1906
Sponsored by Harvard University, Reisner begins his dig and locates the remains of the Upper Temple

1908
The Valley Temple yields a trove of artworks depicting Pharaoh Menkaure, including four intact triad statues

1910
Reisner uncovers a splendid stone sculpture depicting Menkaure escorted by a mysterious female figure

ALABASTER HEAD OF MENKAURE, DISCOVERED IN THE VALLEY TEMPLE IN 1908. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON
BRIDGEMAN/AC

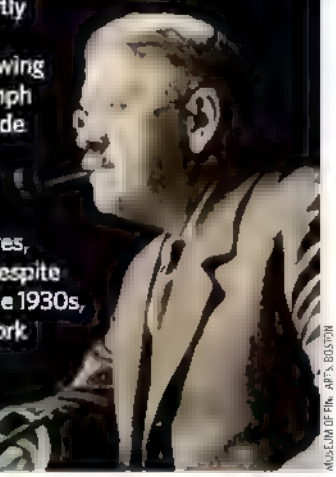
found the empty sarcophagus of the king, which he shipped off to London. The ship carrying it was wrecked, and Menkaure's sarcophagus ended up on the seabed. Reisner hoped that locating the lost temples would yield artifacts that would compensate for the theft and loss of so many objects from the pyramid, and shed much needed light on this period of the Old Kingdom.

In 1906 Reisner was ready to begin searching his alloted share of the Giza complex. The head of an expedition organized by Harvard University, Reisner would patiently and methodically excavate the site. His prudence paid off. In December he uncovered the "Upper Temple." In June 1908 he found another major structure, known as the "Valley

(continued on page 94)

REISNER'S REVELATIONS

GEORGE A. REISNER was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1867. Educated at Harvard, he pursued a career in Egyptology, developing meticulous excavation and recording methods based partly on his use of field photography. Following his 1906–1910 triumph at Giza, Reisner made another great discovery in 1925, finding the tomb of Queen Hetepheres, mother of Khufu. Despite losing his sight in the 1930s, he continued his work with the help of his daughter.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

MYSTERY WOMAN

IN 1910 a boy beckoned George Reisner over to a pit at Menkaure's Valley Temple to show him treasure: the tops of two stone heads protruding from the sand. After Reisner retrieved the double statue, he knew he was in the presence of a masterpiece: The couple are serene and powerful, individualized and regal. The male figure depicts Menkaure, recognizable by his royal headwear. The identity of the female figure who embraces the king has puzzled scholars, since the statue bears no names. Wearing no divine accessories, she is not a goddess, but a mortal woman, most likely either Menkaure's mother or his Great Royal Wife.

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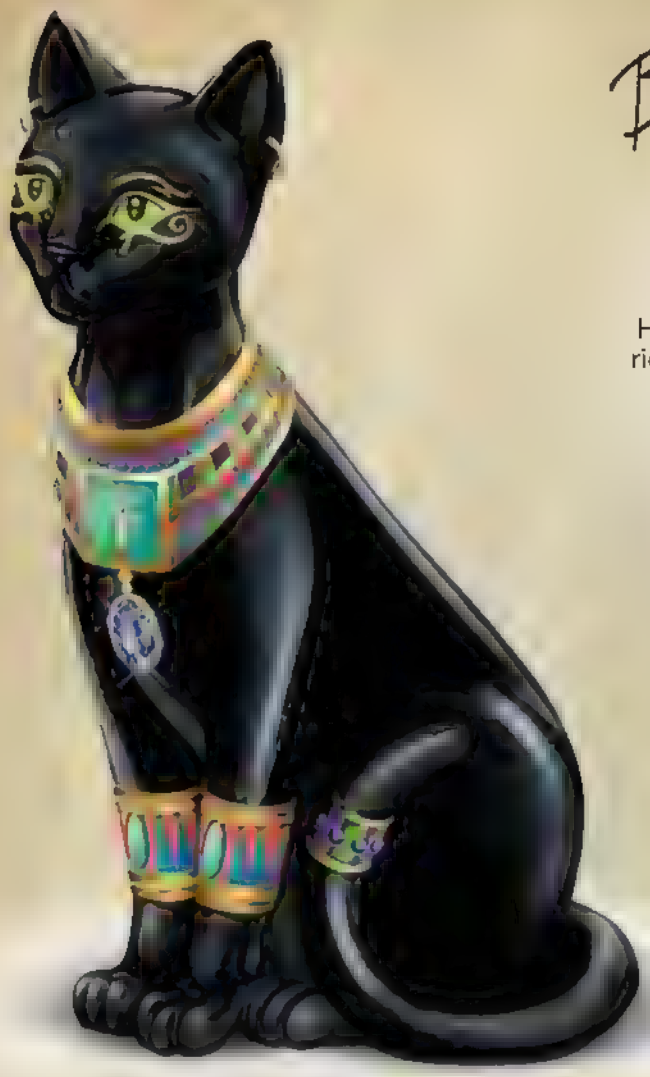

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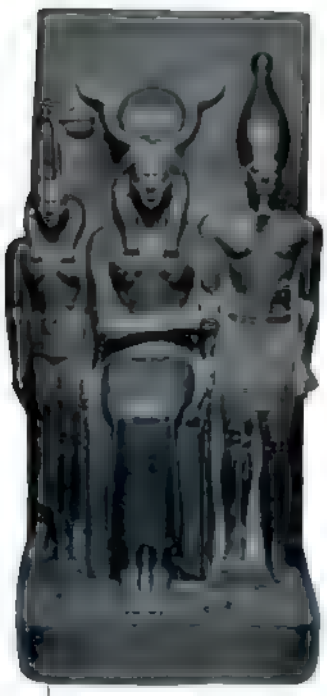

Divine protector, Hathor, enthroned, holds Menkaure by the waist, touching his right arm. In his right hand is a mace. Next to Hathor is a smaller, lesser, regional deity from the Hare nome.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Menkaure stands in the center and holds two scrolls. To the left is Hathor, and to the right is the deity of the Waset nome. All three have their left leg extended forward, giving a sense of action and purpose.
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

The pharaoh is flanked by Hathor on the left and on the right by the deity of the Jackal nome, whose animal form is seen above her. The goddesses grip the king's arms in a subtle but protective gesture.
Egyptian Museum, Cairo

LEFT TO RIGHT: BRIDGEMAN/ACI; JOSÉ LUIS/AGE FOTOSTOCK; DEA/ALBUM

Temple," crudely constructed due to the king's sudden, unexpected death.

As excavation continued, Reisner found a cache of remarkable artworks celebrating Menkaure in the Valley Temple. The most notable were four intact triads (groups of three figures) carved from graywacke, a type of sandstone. Preserved in near-perfect condition, the four pieces depict, in varying configurations: Menkaure wearing the tall crown, or *hedjet*, of Upper Egypt; the goddess Hathor, identified by her characteristic horned headdress and solar disk; and a third figure personifying regional deities from the provinces of Egypt.

A Masterpiece

Later, when Reisner thought the temple had already revealed all of its secrets, a double sculpture came to light in 1910. It depicted the pharaoh Menkaure wearing a *nemes*, the striped royal headcloth, and a woman with her arm around his waist. Traces of pigment remain on the figures: red on his face and black on her hair. There are no names inscribed on the piece. While scholars agree that the male is most likely Menkaure, they are divided as to whether the female is the Great Royal Wife, Queen Khamerernebti, or Menkaure's mother.

This duo is counted among the greatest masterpieces ever unearthed in Egypt. With the graywacke polished to a smooth finish, the work blends tenderness and majesty, transmitting both the confidence and humanity of a powerful ruler.

The function of the triads is uncertain, although the grouping of king, Hathor, and regional deities can be seen as a powerful statement of national unity. A series of unfinished statuettes of the king also found at the site—some still as stone blocks with cut marks indicated in red pigment—have given scholars a rich understanding of sculptural methods in the Old Kingdom. Above all, however, it is the striking realism of the pieces that brings the unimaginably different world of 4,500 years ago just a little closer.

—Carme Mayans

The triple grouping of king, goddess, and regional symbols can be seen as a powerful statement of national unity.

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Next Issue

JOUSTING IN THE AIR
A BRITISH SOPWITH CAMEL IN BATTLE WITH GERMAN BIPLANES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

WORLD WAR I FLYING ACES

SLIGHTLY MORE than a decade after the Wright brothers' first flight, aircraft began soaring over the battlefields of World War I on reconnaissance missions, and gave a newfound perspective on the military maneuvers below. When a French crew shot down a German plane, air-to-air combat was born, and warfare was transformed forever. Engineers fine-tuned maneuverability and retooled weapons for dogfights. Daring pilots pushed themselves to the limit, adding a dash of chivalrous glamour to the ugliness of war.

THE SISTINE CHAPEL: A TOUCH OF GENIUS

CENTERED ON nine key vignettes from the Book of Genesis, the frescoes on the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel epitomize the genius of the High Renaissance. Pope Julius II's choice of Michelangelo for the job in 1508 did not seem an obvious one. The pope and the painter had a stormy relationship, while other artists—jealous of the brilliant Florentine—questioned his competence for the job. Only by overcoming astonishing technical difficulties could Michelangelo pull off one of the greatest artistic feats of all time.

MICHELANGELO'S "THE CREATION OF ADAM," SISTINE CHAPEL, VATICAN CITY

ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO MUSEI VATICANI

Babylon's Builder King

Sacking Jerusalem in 587 B.C. cast him in shadow to some, but to his people, Nebuchadrezzar II was a bringer of light, whose reign was marked by the glorious rebuilding of Babylon.

The Colossus of Rhodes

"Few can clasp its thumb in their arms," wrote Pliny the Elder of this wonder of the ancient world, an enormous statue of Helios that once loomed over the harbor of Rhodes.

Rome's Vestal Virgins

In ancient Rome six priestesses tended the flame of Vesta, goddess of the hearth. These women lived according to a strict code but enjoyed rights unavailable to other Roman women.

The Truth About the Assassins

Inspiring with their tenacity, craft, and cunning, the Nizari Ismailiyyah, a Muslim sect, were the source for the fantastic stories of the Assassins, deadly killers living in hidden mountain fortresses of Iran and Syria in the late Middle Ages.

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